The Angola Three Update (see page 6)

COMMEMORATOR

Published by the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party

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Oakland Community School Remembered on Huey's Birthday

A Benefit for Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign

Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party's (CCBPP) Tenth Annual Black History Labor College Celebration was held on Huey Newton's birthday – February 17 – at the historic site of the original Oakland Community School (OCS) in East Oakland.

The event – a Benefit for Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign – brought together former students and staff of OCS as well as community residents, including former Black Panther Party members and seniors from Glide Memorial Church.

Melvin Dickson, Chairman of CCBPP and an original full-time Black Panther Party (BPP) member, opened the event stating, "The program is not about reminiscing, but about implementing the goals and principles of the Black Panther Party as articulated in the Ten-Point Program written in 1966."

Dickson introduced speakers Ericka Huggins, former Black Panther Party leader and Director of the Oakland Community School (1973 - 1981); Dr. Melvin Newton, Huey Newton's older brother, a former BPP member and retired Peralta School District administrator and teacher; and Reverend Donald Guest from Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco. Attendees included Emory Douglas, BPP's Minister of Culture; Dr. Tolbert Small, head of BPP's George Jackson Health Clinic and organizer of the BPP Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation; and Ruth Villa Jones, founder of the BPP senior citizens "SAFE" Program – and a community activist to this day at the age of 102!

Ericka Huggins: "Huey used to come to our school every week!"

Ericka Huggins, who was the Deputy Minister of Information for the BPP and a political prisoner from 1969 to 1972, talked about the importance of the Oakland Community School and how it was a model for learning.

"We felt that the children deserved the very best of the best," Huggins said. "If a child had a question – was curious – we would investigate it."

Huggins said Huey used to come to the school every week – "the children made him feel alive."

"How old would Huey be today?" she asked the crowd.

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Photo by Commemorator Staff

Ruth Jones (left), a dedicated Black Panther community worker, with Ericka Huggins, former BPP leader, at a tribute to Black History and the February 17 birthday of BPP co-founder, Dr. Huey P. Newton.

Federal Court Orders Retrial with Jury on Mumia's Death Sentence

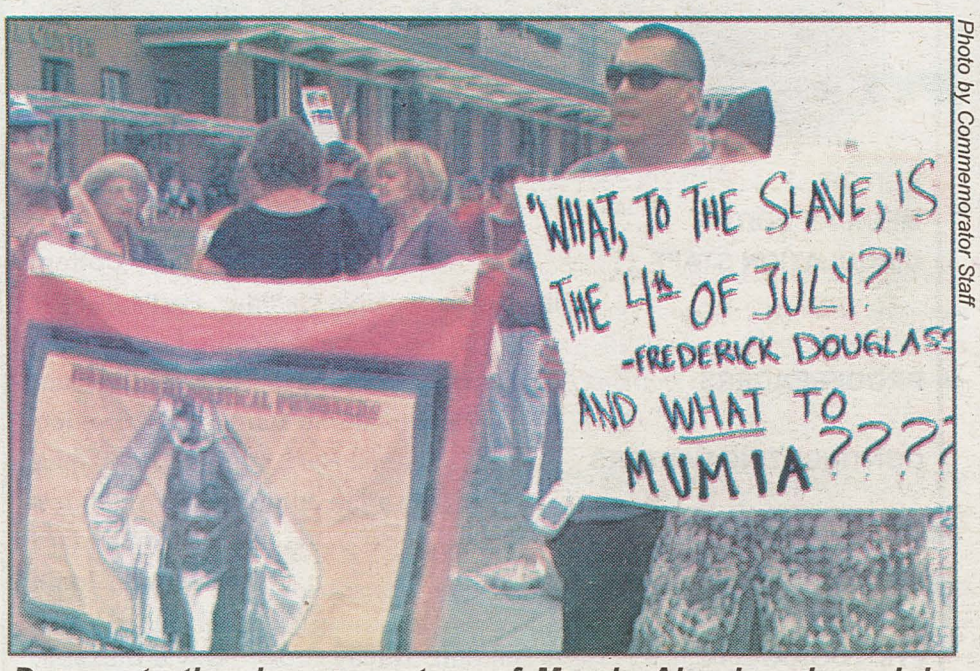

Photo by Commemorator Staff

Demonstration by supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal on July 4th in Philadelphia protesting the Third Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals decision.

Editor's note: Robert Bryan, Esq., lead counsel for Mumia Abu-Jamal, writes about the significance of the recent court ruling in Abu-Jamal's case by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, Philadelphia which ordered a new jury trial on the question of a sentence to life or death for Mumia. This is a continued attack by the U.S. justice system against Mumia. The fight remains to be won for a complete reversal of the conviction. Bryan is one of the nation's leading defense attorneys for death penalty cases.

Dear Friends,

This Legal Update is made on behalf of my client, Mumia Abu-Jamal, who remains on Pennsylvania's death row. Many people have inquired as to

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EDITORIAL

The Rich get Richer – At Our Expense

On all levels of state government, the California economy represents the interests of the same wealthy class at the expense of low and middle-income communities. Politicians, who tend to laugh all the way to the bank, represent the constituency made wealthy by exploiting lower and middle class communities.

Case in point: California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, when being asked about California's $15.2 billion deficit and the state's budget, flamboyantly waved his personal money clip, announcing, "I still have some money left." This arrogant gesture, astounding as it may be, indeed, comes while most of California's citizens dig to the bottom of their pockets to make ends meet in a record-breaking economic crisis, as oil prices escalate and they suffer attacks on their communities, income, affordable housing, health care and schools — theft of resources from the most vulnerable by those in power. At best by inflating prices while keeping wages stagnant, they've given all of us a pay cut. Meanwhile, Exxon and other oil companies continue to post record profits quarter after quarter.

"The economic crisis in the United States is destroying its residents' ability to survive,"

Consider the fact that a record number of over 18.6 million houses, apartments and condominiums and over 200,000 newly built homes currently stand empty throughout the United States due to the national subprime loan scandal and credit crisis. Meanwhile, there are approximately 3.5 million people (including children) in the US experiencing homelessness at any given time in a year. Yet, the political leadership of this most advanced industrial and richest country in the world will not use the resources available – such as almost 20 million empty housing units – to eliminate homelessness, create jobs, pay living wages, make housing affordable, so that all working people can lead productive lives and have a decent roof over their head.

The government estimates that 28 million people will be on food stamps nationwide by the end of the year, the greatest number in the history of the program.

The arrogance of wealthy officials is not unique to California. New York City's Mayor Michael Bloomberg, preaching the necessity to tighten belts and slash city jobs and services due to deficits, has amassed personal wealth estimated at approximately $11.5 billion according Forbes magazine, as he demands city and state workers take cuts in pay without protest. New Jersey Governor Corzine has a personal fortune of approximately $300 million; he will not be hurting as he cuts New Jersey services and jobs either.

Illustration by Jonik

"The economic crisis in the United States is destroying its residents' ability to survive," stated CCBPP volunteer Oscar Stingily, who is a senior in ethnic studies at Humboldt State University. "This issue is very apparent in California's public education system, where the state continues to ignore the needs of teachers and students alike and, to some degree, administrators."

The $20 billion shortfall in Schwarzenegger's proposed budget would result a $4.8 billion cut in education this next year. As a result of the projected budget cuts, at least 24,000 teachers across the state were issued "pink slips" informing them that they could potentially be laid off. This attack has pushed many of California's teachers to find employment elsewhere, leaving California's public schools even more under-staffed and under-funded than before.

On August 2, Schwarzenegger ordered a "temporary" pay cut to $6.55 an hour for roughly 200,000 state workers – making them the lowest-paid workers in California – and laid off 10,000 more.

The state had already made a 10% cut in its Medicaid reimbursements and deferred payments to vendors. According to State Comptroller John Chiang, if the state budget is not worked out and passed by the end of August, the Comptroller's office would be forced to forego more than $3 billion in payments to schools, rural hospitals, health clinics, nursing homes and other organizations that provide state services.

The governor's proposed budget will not only leave many teachers jobless, but it will also force more students into already overcrowded classrooms and an even greater lack of resources (i.e., textbooks, desks, after school programs, etc.). This attack on public education affects all communities unable to afford privatized education and particularly affects lower and middle-income communities with large percentages of people of color, especially since these schools are under-funded and under-staffed already. Whether it is intentional or unintentional, a $4.8 billion cut in our community's education is criminal.

"One problem in society is the growing inequality in the U.S. economy," said Mark Di Camillo, director of the California Field Poll, writes Steven Harmon of *Medianews* Sacramento Bureau.

With the economy falling apart, affecting job security and resulting in families having less income for survival, with housing foreclosures at a crisis level and affordable housing drying up, with people having trouble getting to work because they cannot afford gas in their cars, with electricity rates skyrocketing, along with medical costs, added to the environmental crisis all hitting people at once, it is hard for most people to focus on where to start to understand, let alone find solutions to the problems we collectively are facing. That's where organization comes in.

As far as fascism is concerned, this is monopoly capitalism at it best. Under monopoly capitalism, huge federal bailouts pass over the objection of most working people in part because all our senators are millionaires. Likewise, Mr. Schwarzenegger's confidence probably comes partly because his assets are reported to be worth at least $100 million.

This is also why the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party promotes the BPP Ten-Point Program that addresses the economics of the ruling class exploitation of the majority of the American working class and the have-nots.

All Power to the People

Opinions and positions taken in articles with bylines are those of their writers. The views expressed in the bylined editorials and opinion pieces published by COMMEMORATOR *do not necessarily indicate its endorsement or support — Editor*

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"SERVING ALL OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES"

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OBITUARY

Thelma Traylor Seale — March 3, 1908 to January 25, 2008

Courtesy of the Seale family

Thelma Traylor Seale captured the hearts of her children, her friends, neighbors and community. She leaves a legacy of a caring and giving individual.

Thelma Traylor Seale, mother of Black Panther Party Co-Founder Bobby Seale, died on January 25, just 37 days short of her 100th birthday.

Thelma lived through the tumultuous events of the 20th century: from the race riots of 1919 – referred to as the "Red Summer" during which 26 race riots took place in major U.S. cities, all started by whites, in which hundreds of blacks were killed – the enforcement of Jim Crow laws and segregation, the rise of the civil rights movement, integration of the public schools "with all deliberate speed," desegregation, the signing of the Voting Rights Act, the rise of the Black Power Movement and its destruction, to the world economic and political developments of the beginning of the new millennium. Thelma supported her community, her family and her son, Bobby Seale.

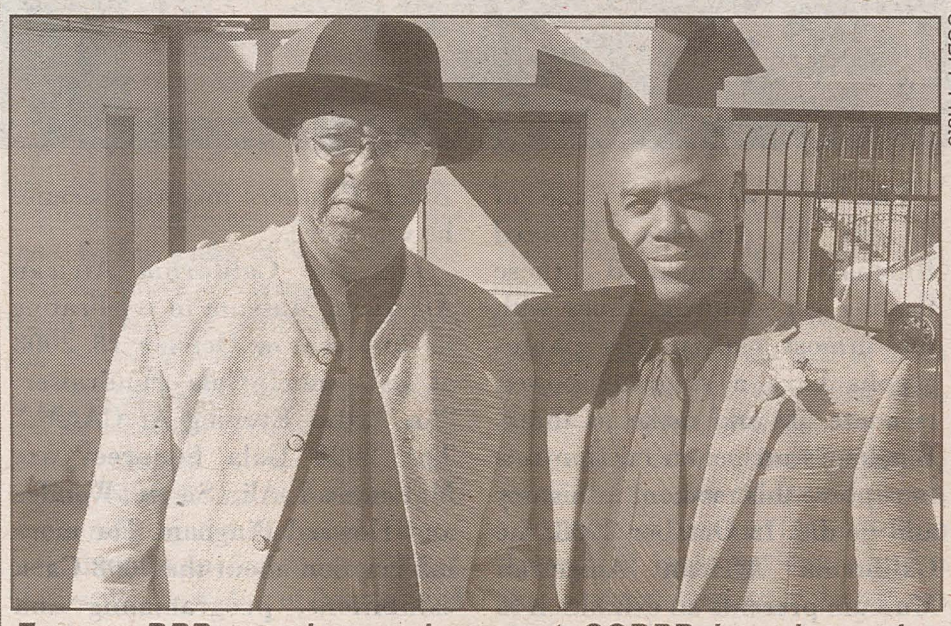
Born on March 3, 1908 in Jasper, Texas, Thelma grew up on her parents' 168-acre farm, known as the Traylor Settlement, which also contained a syrup mill and several homes. Thelma was the fifteenth of sixteen children and the longest survivor. Her husband George, parents, Alexander and Julia Traylor, fifteen brothers and sisters and most notably her twin sister, Zelma Traylor-Turner (number fourteen) and her firstborn, Baby Seale, and her youngest child, John Henry, preceded her in death.

Thelma attended the Jasper Public Schools where she earned her high school diploma and was an excellent basketball player. In high school, Thelma met her future husband, the late George Seale. They were married in 1933, and gave birth to four children, Baby Seale (stillborn), Bobby, Bettye Jeen and the late John Henry.

During World War II, Thelma worked as a mail delivery person and mimeograph specialist at the Kelly Field (Kelly Air Force Base) in San Antonio. Thelma was loved by her coworkers for her sweet and kind disposition and her beautiful smile.

CCBPP Photo

Leslie Johnson-Seale (left), a former BPP member and the wife of Bobby Seale, with daughter Arvis Seale after the funeral at Oakland Allen Temple Church.



CCBPP Photo

Former BPP member and current CCBPP board member Bobby Coleman (left), and Malik Seale, the eldest son of Bobby Seale, at his grandmother's funeral.

LOVE LETTERS TO OUR MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER

By Bobby Seale

I truly loved my mother, Thelma Seale. Mama taught me to love humanity. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you, yourself. My Mama always taught us that. Her teachings, to my younger brother John, my sister Bettye and I, were to share and share alike with others. Mama's early teachings were the basis of my fair share of equality ideology... long before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., inspired me at the Oakland Auditorium in 1962. Because of my mother, in her consistent, loving Christian way, I say that she, more than anyone, was the basis and reasoning behind my life-long civil rights, social change, and programmatic activism. My mother was my special reference point through all of this... my protest movement efforts — from the college campus to the grassroots community organizing — through jails and courtroom battles and trials. While I was in jail awaiting trials, I will never forget that my Mama spoke at the podium at Glide Memorial Church, so passionately, to protest to "Free Bobby Seale," her son. My Mama loved her children.

Yes, I truly loved Mama.
Bobby Seale

CCBPP Photo

Bobby Seale, Black Panther cofounder, and the elder son of Thelma Traylor Seale.

After living in Dallas, Beaumont and San Antonio, the Seale family migrated to Berkeley, California in 1943, where they moved into the Codornices Village Housing Projects. During this period, while being a wife and mother, Thelma held a job as a sandwich maker at the Viking Food Company of San Francisco.

The Seale family moved to Oakland in the late fifties, where Thelma resided until her passing. She worked as a domestic in Walnut Creek for the Basie Family, a position she held for over twenty years. Thelma lived by the teachings of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and practiced the principle that whatever job you hold, be the best at it.

Thelma was outspoken in the early days of the Black Panther Party in defense of their work. She opened up her living room for BPP formative meetings, often cooked meals for them, and spoke out in defense of her son. She was vocal in the community when her son was kidnapped in 1968 by the FBI and driven across the country to stand trial in the "Chicago Conspiracy" case for causing the police riot in Grant Park at the 1968 Chicago Convention, where he was tied to a chair and gagged during the trial. Everyone in the community knew she was a faithful Christian and acted on her principles.

Thelma was also a history buff and she appreciated beautiful clothes and fine perfumes.

Once Thelma became incapacitated and moved from her daughter's home into a skilled nursing facility, she was loved and respected by all the nurses and doctors who treated her.

Thelma leaves to cherish her memory two children, Bobby Seale and Bettye Jeen Williams; eight grandchildren, Mercelle, Shekem, Malik, Arvis, Charlotte, Abraxas, Romaine, Erika, Gabriel and J'aime; and six great-grandchildren, Alexandria, Kai, Imara, Seven, Zoe, and Michael, as well as a host of nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

All Power to the People!

CCBPP Photo

Barbarette Newton with son, Arturo Newton, representing the Newton Family at the funeral of Thelma Seale, the loving mother of Bobby, John, and Bettye Jeen Seale Williams.

Letters to the Editor

"They tried to say she died on the way to the hospital"

CCBPP Photo

Patricia Johnson, sister of Anita Gay, understands why the city of Berkeley gives her smokescreens and a run-a-around.

9/6/08
Dear Editor,

My name is Patricia Johnson and I'm the second oldest sister of Anita Gay. Anita was shot and killed by Berkeley's police officer Rashun Cummings on February 16, 2008. Officer Cummings said that he feared for the safety and lives of himself and Anita's children. I arrived at the block where Anita was killed only to be told by police officers that I had to wait at the corner. I couldn't see my sister nor her children or grandchildren. As I stood there waiting the ambulance passed by me *with no siren on* with my sister in it already dead. They tried to say she died on the way to the hospital but she was already dead at the scene. According to eyewitnesses, Officer Cummings shot her in the back. He shot again and the bullet grazed her face, and then he shot into the house where her children were. The bullet fired into the house grazed the lower part of her daughter Sherri, leaving a black burned mark below her right eye. Anita's right side of her face had to be waxed down at the funeral home so her skin would not show.

Society needs to realize that the behaviors of these officers are in need of a change. Their kind of training and education... is not working.

Officer Cummings has never been made accountable for his action for the murder of my sister. The police report is a joke. The first thing those witnesses and neighbors asked officer Cummings, "Why did you shoot her? She didn't do anything! Her hands were up against the wall!" (See Oakland Tribune's February 18, 2008 edition.) Cooperating with officer Cummings was not the issue. If she had turned her face the bullet would have hit her in the temple on the side of her head.

Sherri has said that she did not see her mother with a knife. She was taken down to the police headquarters' and further questioned. They questioned her until she said what they wanted her to say: "Officer Cummings saved her and her sister from their mother."

I'm sure they told Sherri all about her "rights." They told her that she had a right to an attorney to represent her and the right to remain silent. But they bullied her. They refused to tell her if her mother was dead or alive. After they had gotten her to agree to what they told her about how it had happened.

So now, it has been 7 months since my sister was murdered. The way these officers and the whole Berkeley system works, I'm not surprised at all that the murdering officer Cummings is back on the streets even though there's supposed to be another hearing about his conduct on the job. Why are they allowing this officer to go right back to work as a police officer even though his conduct is supposedly under investigation by the city? Our families suffer and these officers go free with no accountability whatsoever — to kill again.

Right now, I fear for my life from the very same people I am supposed to trust! I learned a long time ago that it's always the people you trust who do the most harm to you because they will assure you that they'll make the harm go away. Some of these officers have killed before and will kill again.

Society needs to realize that the behaviors of these officers are in need of a change. Their kind of training and education is not working. The police need better training and education — they need people skills, by way of helping people not harming or killing people.

All Power To The People

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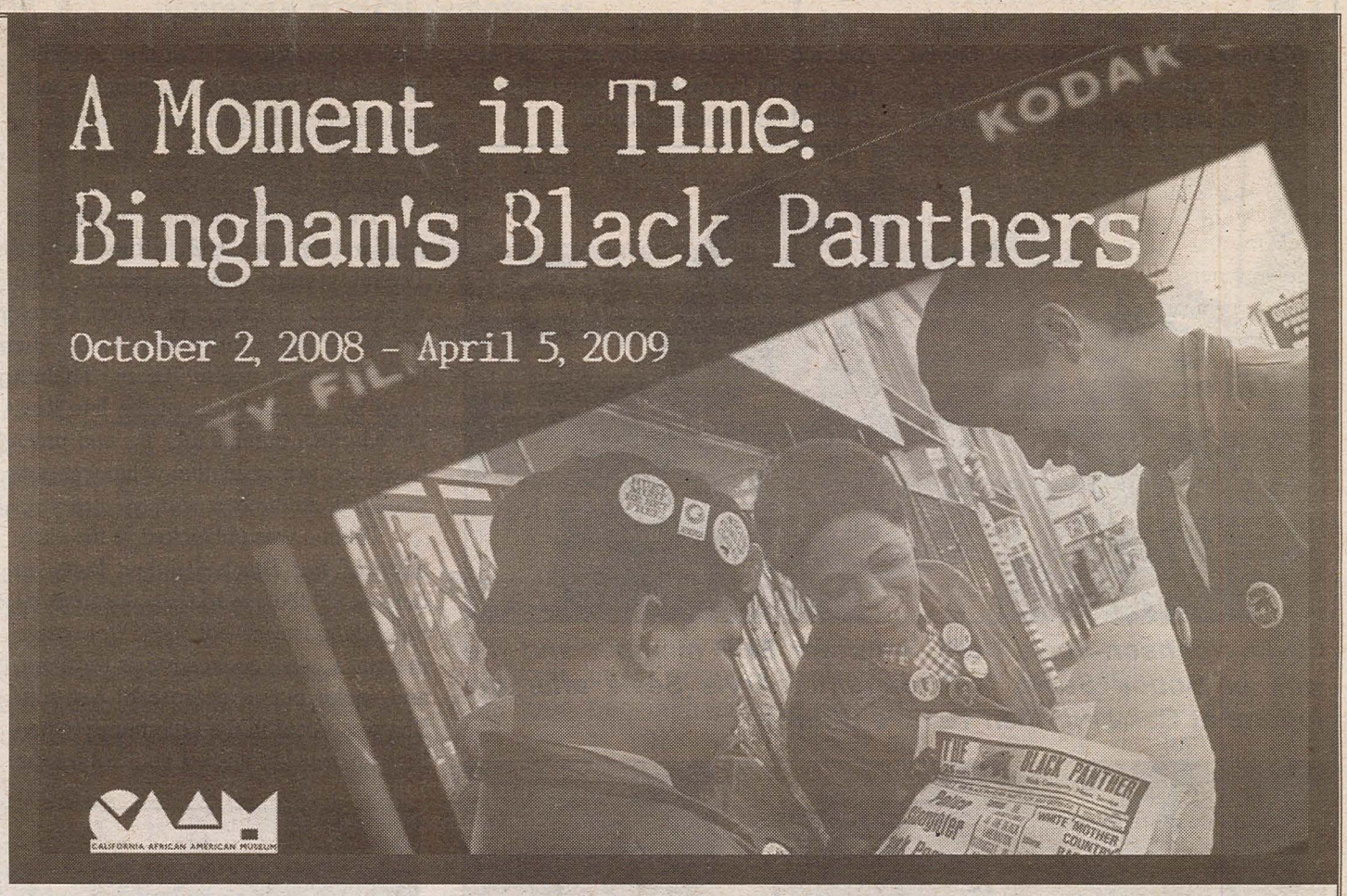
An exhibition sponsored by the California African American Museum

October 2, 2008 - April 5, 2009



In 1968, under the auspices of *Life* magazine, photographer Howard L. Bingham and journalist Gilbert Moore began a historical journey that would document not only the public, but also the more private life of several leaders of the Black Panther Party. From March through October, from Los Angeles to Oakland, and Berkeley to New York, Bingham's camera immortalized this moment in time with Huey P. Newton, Stokely Carmichael, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver and his wife, Kathleen Neal Cleaver, David Hilliard, and the many initiates, believers and observers. Bingham's photographs reveal the energy of political education classes, conferences, public rallies, demonstrations, and court and jail houses. Captured also are the private spaces of the Cleavers' apartment, Panther headquarters and other comrades, often forgotten, whose parallel stories were frequently ignored by the more sensationalistic press.

This exhibition not only showcases recognizable snapshots taken during public displays, but also poised, private and unusual moments that Panther leaders could have only granted to a well-trusted soul whose artistry and openness to the cause would be honestly reflected through the lens of a camera. That is the access they gave to photographer Howard Bingham, from which he created an extremely personal and priceless tribute. Among the thousands of photographs that Bingham took during several months in 1968, a select few have been pulled for this exhibition and accompanying publication.

The 60's were a decade of dissent in America. Howard Bingham documented these fleeting yet enduring times with the utmost clarity. His photographs have a stopping power, emanate life and make us think. Bingham's unspoken mission was to capture this moment in history and he did. In October 2008, the California African American Museum presents an exhibition to pay tribute to his continuing career, talent and dedication. *A Moment in Time: Bingham's Black Panthers* inspires because he was there.

Join the California African American Museum in celebrating its 30th year on October 18, 2008 at its annual Gala Fundraiser: "An Artful Evening At CAAM." The 2008 Gala honorees are Muhammad Ali, Stevie Wonder and Howard Bingham. For more information about the 2008 Gala, exhibitions, programming and membership, visit CAAM website at www.caamuseum.org or call 213-744-7432.

Letters to the Editor

From Oak Grove Middle School

Dear Mr. Dickson
and Mrs. Marko,

I would like to thank you, together with the 8th grade students at Oak Grove Middle School in Concord, for your visit to our school and for your most informative, interesting and educational presentation to two of our history classes.

It was great to have the two of you. We appreciate all the photos you brought, along with the video presentations, books and newspapers. The effort and preparation you put into your visit to us was obvious. Thank you.

Too often students say that history is boring. I think that is criminal. Students should feel the power and excitement in history, they should understand and value its significance and know the many lessons it has to teach us. It should be one of their favorite subjects and it should never have the adjective boring attached to it. Students should come to know and understand history as something alive and as something that can be learned from people as much as from books. They should definitely know history as something that can help to explain problems and challenges in the world today, and help them to understand not only themselves better, but also their communities and the society around them.

You helped to do all of this. You brought history alive for the students. You made it interesting and relevant. You made the connection among different cultures for them. You even included history of the very town they live in and told them about Cesar Chavez personally visiting the BPP school. These are bridges for them. The many visual aids you brought along were especially important for this age group. A presentation without them for these students would not have been as successful.

Thank you for sharing your time and knowledge with us. It was great to see your respect and enthusiasm for the Party. It was clear that you had strong feelings about the information you were presenting to us. This is what brings a group in to you and makes a presentation strong.

I am not assigned a new class for the upcoming new school year. I was one of the last teachers hired last year. I came aboard midyear. As a result, I am one of the first ones out. However, if and when I find myself in a classroom again, I hope to be able to call on the two of you to visit and speak again with students.

Gracias.
In Solidarity,
Maria Galindo Pavlakos

Dear Mr. Dickson
and Mrs. Marko,

Thank you for coming to our class. We appreciate you taking the time off your day and coming to Oak Grove Middle School.

I learned that the Black Panther is a group of people that help out people that need help like medical help. Education and food like breakfast and things like that. I also learned that the Black Panther was a big population long ago.

I thank you again for coming. And I hope you guys make a change in the world.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Rico

Dear Mr. Dickson
and Mrs. Marko,

Thank you for coming to our class at Oak Grove Middle School. We learned a lot that day about the Black Panther Party. I never thought that people lived that way before. I think it's awesome to help people and make a change. I even liked the video that you showed us about the Black Panther Party back then, Huey P. Newton and how the police killed little kids. I never knew that history before. I guess they believed he was a very important person. That's why they took him to jail to try to stop the Black Panther Party. The movie was interesting, so thank you for coming to our class and teach us about the past.

Sincerely,
Carlos Martinez

Courtesy of Maria Galindo Pavlakos

Neome Marko-Banks (left), a former student of the BPP's Oakland Community School and organizer, Maria Galindo Pavlakos (center), Oak Grove Middle School teacher, and Melvin Dickson, CCBPP Chairman, at Oak Grove School presentation.

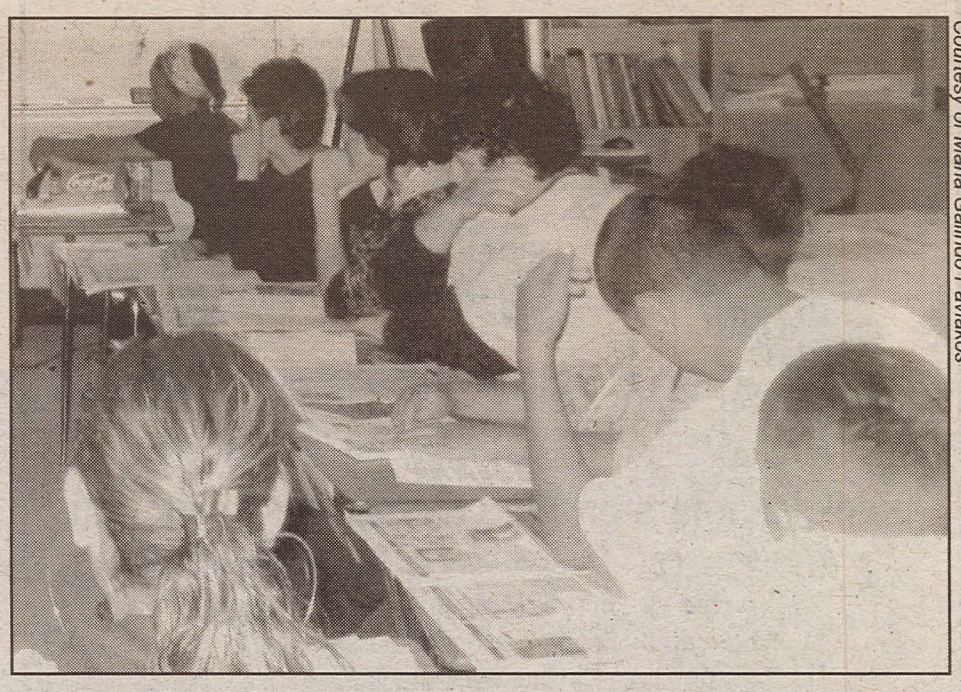
Dear Mr. Dickson and Mrs. Marko,

I would like to start by introducing myself my name is Elizabeth Nava. I attend Oak Grove middle school and I'm in the eighth grade. I would like to thank you for coming to our class. The presentation you gave us was very nice and interesting.

In the presentation you gave us I learned many things, I learned about the Black Panther Party. I learned it started in May 2, 1967 because of police brutality. I learned about the Brown Beret that's known as the Latin version of the Black Panther party. I also learned that they come in solidarity with each other as well as other races. Those are the things that I learned. And I also enjoyed looking at the book, movies, and the newspaper that you showed us.

Once again thank you for your presentation and the time you took off to come talk to us.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Vava



Courtesy of Maria Galindo Pavlakos

Students from Oak Grove Middle School, Concord, CA, learn about the history of the BPP and the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party.

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Angola Three Update

By Tom Sanders

Part of the United States' national dishonor was exposed when U.S. District Judge James Brady issued a ruling this summer approving a federal magistrate's decision that former Black Panther Party member Albert Woodfox of the "Angola Three" should have his conviction overturned given that his previous defense lawyer failed to object to a prosecutor's testimony about a witness' credibility.

Woodfox, who was held in solitary confinement since 1972 in Angola Prison in Louisiana along with former Panthers Herman Wallace and Robert King Wilkerson, was charged with stabbing to death Brent Miller, a white correctional guard.

Mr. Wallace has been appealing his conviction based on arguments similar to Woodfox's.

Mr. Wilkerson had spent twenty nine years in isolation, and his case was overturned in 2001, allowing him to speak at the Bobby Hutton Day Celebration the CCBPP sponsored on April 28, 2001 in West Oakland.

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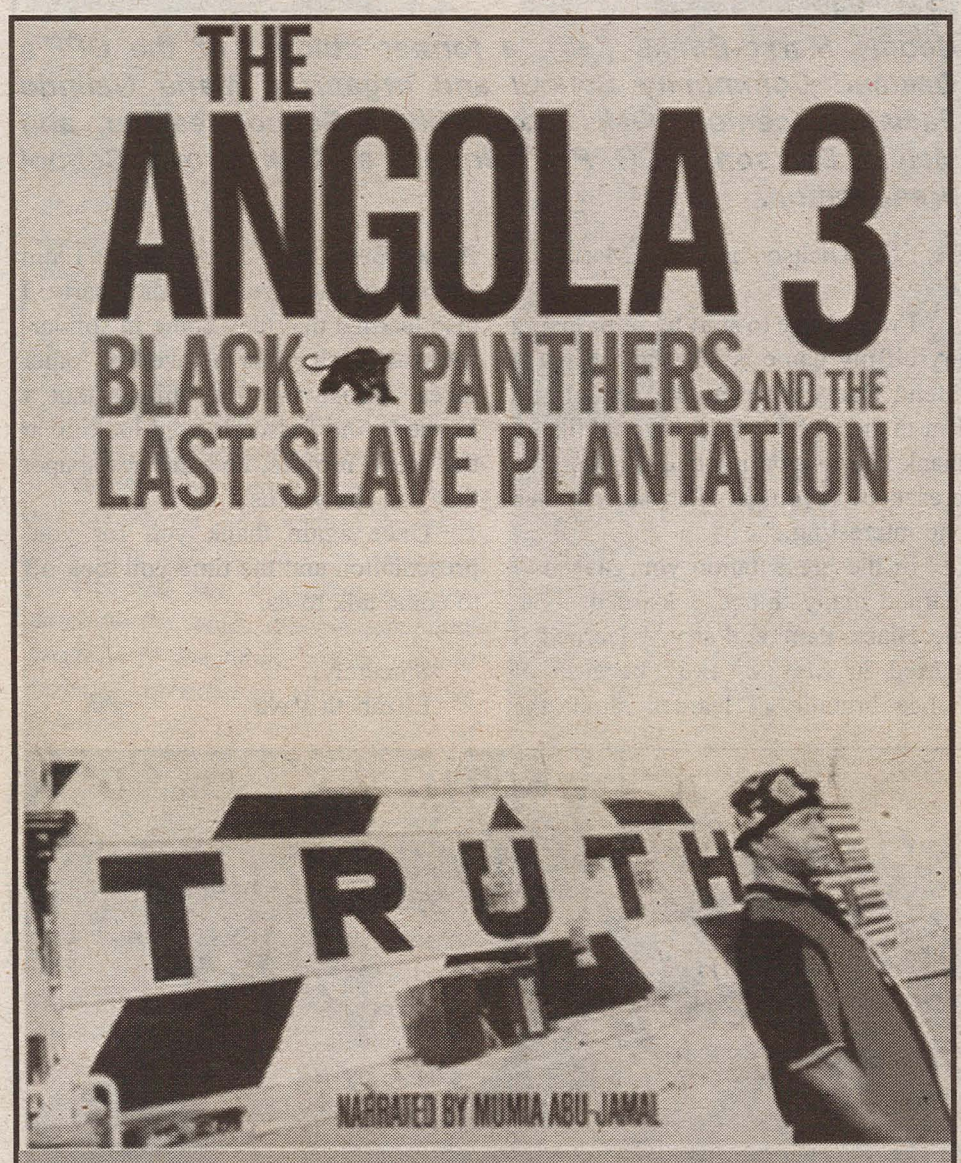


The Angola 3:
Black Panthers and the Last Slave Plantation

A feature-length film narrated by Mumia Abu-Jamal

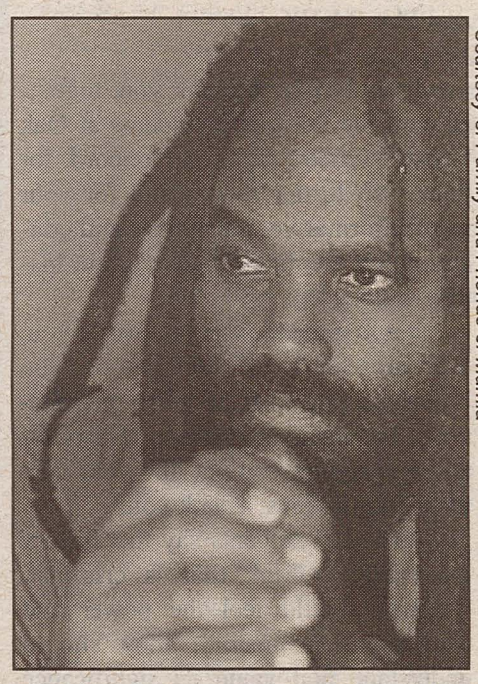
Directed by Jimmy O'Halligan
Produced by Scott Crow and Ann Harkness
To order DVD: Contact www.angola3.org

This documentary tells the gripping story of Robert King, Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox, who have endured solitary confinement longer than any other known living prisoners in the United States. Politicized through contact with the Black Panther Party while inside Louisiana's prisons, they formed one of the only prison Panther chapters in history and worked to organize other prisoners into a movement for the right to live like human beings. This feature-length movie explores their extraordinary struggle for justice while incarcerated at Angola, a former slave plantation where institutionalized rape and murder made it known as one of the most brutal and racist prisons in the United States. The analysis of the Angola 3's political work, and the criminal cases used to isolate and silence them, occurs within the context of the widespread COINTELPRO being carried out in the 1960's and 70's by the FBI and state law enforcement against militant voices for change.

OPINION

On the Presidential Election & the Media: A Brief interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal

By M1 of dead prez



Courtesy of Family and Friends of Mumia

The Prisoners of Conscience Committee (POCC) Minister of Culture M1, also known for his work with the legendary rap group dead prez, interviewed prolific journalist and political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal in June.

A lot of people may wonder what Malcolm X (El Hajj Malik El Shabazz) and Sam Cooke talked about when they were with Muhammad Ali the night that he won his first professional title bout against Sonny Liston, or what Huey P. Newton and Richard Pryor talked about when they used to hang out at parties.

The following was an unscripted conversation between one of the most revolutionary voices in the media today, the "voice of the voiceless," Mumia Abu-Jamal, and one of rap music's most revolutionary voices, M1.

What makes M1 and Mumia different from Malcolm and Sam, or Huey and Richard, is that Malcolm and Huey were the organizers, while Sam was a talented singer and Richard was a legendary comedian. But in this case, although M1 is a rapper and Mumia is a journalist, both have long histories of political organizing in the Black community.

Check out what these two veterans of our struggle talked about, when they finally met for the first time, through some phone lines.

– POCC Minister of Information, JR Valery

M1: This is M1, the People's Advocate, one-half of dead prez and the Minister of Culture of the Prisoners of Conscience Committee signing in for Block Report Radio. I am proud and honored to be on the phone today with Mumia Abu-Jamal, the voice of our people and the voice inside our struggle behind enemy lines…I'm honored to be talking to you here today. How are you feeling?

MUMIA: Good, brother, the honor is also mine. I know of you, not musically but politically, and this is good enough for me.

M1: Good, good. I want to jump right in. A partner of mine and I often talk about the concept of media justice, and with you as the voice of our people's resistance, what information do you feel is the most pertinent in these days of distraction, i.e., Republican versus Democrat? What is the most important thing that we need to know?

MUMIA: The most important thing that we need to know right now is it doesn't matter who gets elected, honestly. I know people heard that years ago when Ralph Nader was running, but I mean in the grand scheme of things, because what we are talking about is differences of degree.

We're talking about two imperial presidents, you know? One will be a pretty brown face, a pretty brown young face, even. One will be a less pretty old white face. But, essentially, what they are both talking about is imperialism. So what people need to understand and really, really need to get is that they should demand through their actions ...

THIS CALL IS FROM THE STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION SCI GREENE, AND IS SUBJECT TO MONITORING AND RECORDING…

MUMIA: They should demand through their activities in the streets and everywhere else what kind of system they want and what they oppose. If they feel that everything is hunkey-dory if you get a Black president, then they'll be just like the people in Philadelphia who believed that everything was great when they got a Black mayor. It really doesn't matter what color someone is, it matters whether they are in support of empire or really in support of democracy.

If you think about this war that we are in the middle of, in order for this war to happen, the government had to ignore not just millions of people in the United States but millions of people, tens of millions of people all

Continued on page 21

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Long Live the Seattle Comrades and Supporters of the Black Panther Party's 40th Anniversary

In 1968, Aaron and Elmer Dixon of Seattle, Washington organized the first BPP chapter outside the state of California. Many Survival Programs were organized through the entity under their leadership, including four free Breakfast programs, a medical clinic, a free busing to prison program, as well as a free Sickle Cell Anemia testing program, testing thousands for the deadly blood disease that the US government ignored. Up through the years, the chapter went on to organize a Free Busing to Prison Program, a Liberation School for Children, four Free Breakfast Programs, and published and circulated over three thousand copies of the *Black Panther Intercommunal News Service*. Some of these programs first started in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the free clinic is open to this day.

Long Live the Seattle Chapter of the Black Panther Party!

Photo by Tracey Brown

Bobby Seale (far right), BPP co-founder gives a key-note speech as Stephen Shames, a noted activist photographer, takes pictures during the 40th Anniversary celebration in Seattle, Washington.

Photo by Tracey Brown

Aaron Dixon (far right), co-founder of BPP Washington State Chapter, speaks to an audience, including former founding members and supporters, from the Seattle community and the Bay Area at the April gathering.

Photo by Tracey Brown

Seattle youth attended the educational workshop on BPP history told by those who forged that history.

Photo by Tracey Brown

Tracey Brown (left), Commemorator *volunteer correspondent, poses with former BPP members, Vernetta Mosley (center) and Leslie Johnson-Seale.*

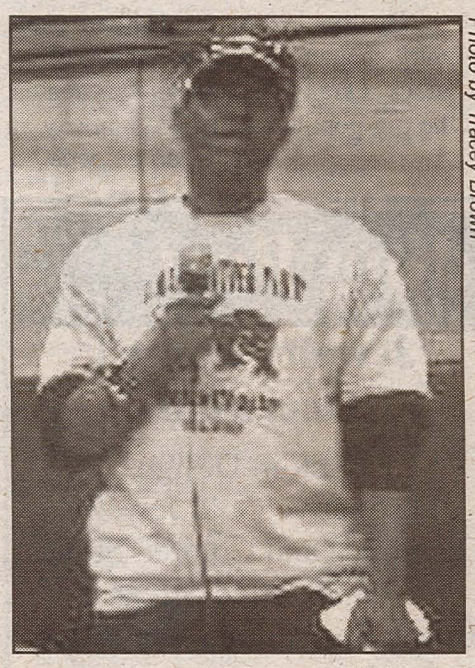

Photo by Tracey Brown

William (Billy X) Jennings, BPP historian from It's About Time, addresses the 40th Anniversary gathering in Seattle on April 26th.

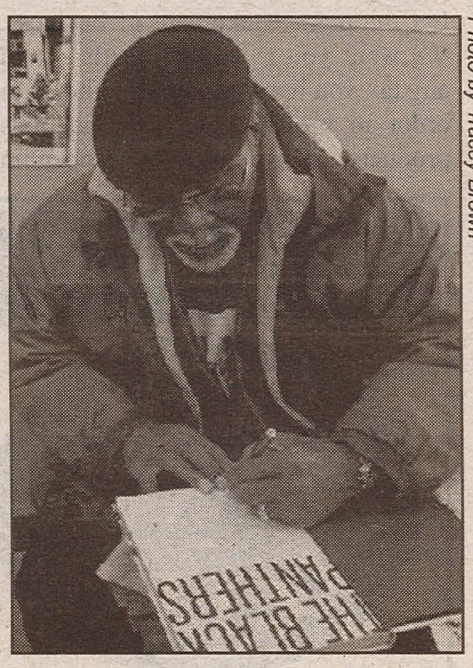

Photo by Tracey Brown

Elbert ("Big-Man") Howard, BPP founding member, signs The Black Panthers *history book by Stephen Shames, BPP photographer.*

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INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

HAITI'S FOOD CRISIS: IMPOSING HUNGER ON THE PEOPLE OF HAITI

Editor's Note: *Pierre Labossiere, co-founder of Haiti Action Committee (HAC) and a member of the Advisory Board of Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) is a longtime Commemorator correspondent. Labossiere gave a presentation on June 26th at* "An Evening In Solidarity With Haiti" *program organized by HAC at La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley, California. This piece is excerpted from his speech.*

By Pierre Labossiere

In Haiti, they have a name for hunger. It's called Clorox hunger – meaning something that eats you from the inside. But, my friends tell me, now it's no longer called Clorox, it's now called Battery Acid. That's how bad the suffering is in Haiti.

When the corporate media talk about Haiti's food crisis, it's as if it's an act of God. It just happens. But, let me tell you, it is manufactured. It's an imposed hunger, an imposed starvation on the people of Haiti. It has a history. It has a history going way back.

To begin with, in 1804 after Haiti became independent, France and the slave-owning nations imposed a debt on Haiti. They demanded that Haiti pay reparations to the slaveholders for the loss of their slaves. That was money that should have gone to our ancestors, the former slaves, to build the country, to the farmers to provide the tools to irrigate and cultivate the land. Instead that money went to France, from 1826 until 1947 when Haiti finished paying the last installment on the debt. That shows you right there one of the reasons why Haiti is poor. They say we are the poorest country in the western hemisphere. But I like to say we are the most impoverished people or, as one of my friends so beautifully puts it, *Haiti is the most robbed nation in the western hemisphere*.

What does this have to do with imposed hunger? Haitians began their independence without having the tools to work the land while being forced to pay incredible taxes. Many times I challenge people who talk about the debt issue as if it began with post-independent African nations in the '60s. The Haitian people say, wait a minute – this started with us when we won our independence. There is a pattern that emerges. People fight for their freedom, the former enslaved people, enslaved Africans – they break the chains of slavery. Their land has been robbed of their natural resources. Yet we are the ones who still owe the people who made us work from can't see in the morning to can't see at night.

You see, there is a pattern. And that is why with respect to this whole issue of debt, the people of Haiti and Brother Aristide demanded that France return the money that was paid in reparations. President Aristide said, "Look it's very hard to calculate reparations. It is possible, but it will take some time to calculate the reparations that should be paid to Haiti. So let's talk first about restitution, to pay us what we know we gave you. We gave France $21 billion in today's currency. So pay us that. And then the next bill that will come will be reparations."

In the 1980s, under the Reagan regime, Haiti, along with many other Caribbean countries, was presented with the Caribbean Basin Initiative. At that time, I was active as a steward in ILWU and I told my fellow union brothers and sisters, they are starting with us, but they will come after everyone. Next thing we knew, there was NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement], which was just another name for the Caribbean Basin Initiative. What they were doing was imposing what they call their neo-liberal plan which basically tells governments, don't invest in education. Let the market take care of business. We want you to reduce tariffs – and any tax you have on imported items in order to protect your own people's products, and we want you to open up your markets. They have all these euphemisms, all those tricky words.

And Reagan, at the same time, was imposing the same thing here, calling it trickle down economics or Reaganomics. But it was the same thing. Then they moved it beyond the Caribbean, so they had NAFTA. Now they have CAFTA [Central American Free Trade Agreement]. When Bush said the New World Order, he was putting a new name on the same old process, imperialism. "I'll take your resources, I don't want you to invest in your people, and you are going to open your markets so that we can flood it with our imports."

The 1970s was when Baby Doc [Haiti's dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier] officially signed off on allowing sweat shops to come into Haiti duty-free. That meant that any corporation that moved to Haiti would be exempt from paying taxes. With the existence of the Ton Ton Macoutes [Duvalier's death squads], no labor union would be tolerated. So they were free to pay whatever little they wanted.

That started the process. But in Haiti, they needed to have a work force, people who were willing to accept any kind of wage. Because of the history of struggle by the Haitian peasantry, many Haitians had their own small plots of land on which they independently cultivated food for their families and provided for the local market. So Haitians were pretty much self sufficient in food production. I'm not saying there was no poverty, but there wasn't the kind of hunger we see today. We had the technology, the food processing. We had our cassava, we had the way people processed corn – we put it in banana leaves in order to preserve the food, and so many other dishes, so many ways that people do things because we have been on this earth for a long, long time. And we managed to survive without refrigerators. When I was growing up, we didn't have one at home and I never missed it.

By the 1980s, the Haitian peasantry began to come under direct attack. One of the attacks was against the pig population. Haiti is mostly an

Continued on page 15

For the liberation of Haiti

Protesters in Berkeley chanted:

They didn't want the Marines Invasion,
They don't want the U.N. Occupation,
What they want is Self-determination,
Let the Haitian People have their Say!
Let the Haitian People have their Way!"

Courtesy of Haiti Action Committee

On February 29, Pierre Labossiere (holding the mike) addressed a protest at the U.S. Marine Corps office in Berkeley opposing the U.S.-led occupation of Haiti.

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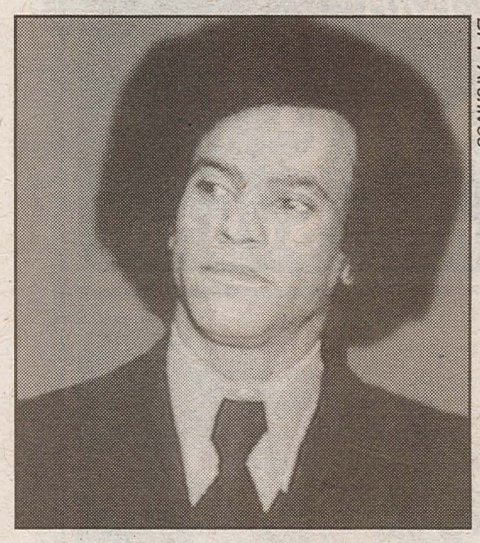

BPP Archives

Dr. Huey P. Newton

Fear and Doubt

May 15, 1967

(Excerpt from *To Die for the People*, Section 2, *The People, Black America,* by Dr. Huey P. Newton)

The lower socio-economic Black male is a man of confusion. He faces a hostile environment and is not sure that it is not his own sins that have attracted the hostilities of society. All his life he has been taught (explicitly and implicitly) that he is an inferior approximation of humanity. As a man, he finds himself void of those things that bring respect and a feeling of worthiness. He looks around for something to blame for his situation, but because he is not sophisticated regarding the socio-economic milieu and because of negativistic parental and institutional teachings, he ultimately blames himself.

When he was a child his parents told him that they were not affluent because "we didn't have the opportunity to become educated," or "we did not take advantage of the educational opportunities that were offered to us." They tell their children that things will be different for them if they are educated and skilled but there is absolutely nothing other than this occasional warning (and often not even this) to stimulate education. Black people are great worshipers of education, even the lower socio-economic Black person, but at the same time they are afraid of exposing themselves to it. They are afraid because they are vulnerable to having their fears verified; perhaps they will find that they can't compete with White students. The Black person tells himself that he could have done much more if he had really wanted to. The fact is, of course, that the assumed educational opportunities were never available to the lower socio-economic Black person due to the unique position assigned him in life.

It is a two-headed monster that haunts this man. First, his attitude is that he lacks the innate ability to cope with the socio-economic problems confronting him, and second, he tells himself that he has the ability, but he simply has not felt strongly enough to try to acquire the skills needed to manipulate his environment. In a desperate attempt to assume self-respect he rationalizes that he is lethargic, in this way, he denies a possible lack of innate ability. If he openly attempts to discover his abilities he and others may see him for what he is – or is not – and this is the real fear. He then withdraws into the world of the invisible, but not without a struggle. He may attempt to make himself visible by processing his hair, acquiring a "boss mop" or driving a long car even though he cannot afford it. He may father several "illegitimate" children by several different women in order to display his masculinity. But in the end, he realizes that his efforts have no real effect.

Society responds to him as a thing, a beast, a nonentity, something to be ignored or stepped on. He is asked to respect laws that do not respect him. He is asked to digest a code of ethics that acts upon him, but not for him. He is confused and in a constant state of rage, of shame, of doubt. This psychological state permeates all of his interpersonal relationships. It determines his view of the social system. His psychological development has been prematurely arrested. This doubt begins at a very early age and continues throughout his life. The parents pass it on to the child and the social system reinforces the fear, the shame, and the doubt. In the third or fourth grade he may find that he shares the classroom with White students, but when the class is engaged in reading exercises, all the Black students find themselves in a group at a table reserved for slow readers. This may be quite an innocent effort on the part of the school system. The teacher may not realize that the Black students feared (in fact, feel certain) that Black means dumb, and White means smart. The children do not realize that the head start White children get at home is what accounts for the situation. It is generally accepted that the child is the father of the man; this holds true for the lower socio-economic Black people.

With whom, with what can he, a man, identify? As a child he had no permanent male figure with whom to identify; as a man, he sees nothing in society with which he can identify as an extension of himself. His life is built on mistrust, shame, doubt, guilt, inferiority, role confusion, isolation and despair. He feels that he is something less than a man, and it is evident in his conversation: "The White man is 'THE MAN,' he got everything, and he knows everything, and a nigger ain't nothing." In a society where a man is valued according to occupation and material possessions, he is without possessions. He is unskilled and more often than not, either marginally employed or unemployed. Often his wife (who is able to secure a job as a maid, cleaning for White people) is the breadwinner. He is, therefore, viewed as quite worthless by his wife and children. He is ineffectual both in and out of the home. He cannot provide for, or protect his family. He is invisible, a nonentity. Society will not acknowledge him as a man. He is a consumer and not a producer. He is dependent upon the White man ("THE MAN") to feed his family, to give him a job, educate his children, serve as the model that he tries to emulate. He is dependent and he hates "THE MAN: and he hates himself. Who is he? Is he a very old adolescent or is he the slave he used to be?

"What did he do to be so Black and blue?"

All Power to the People

An Open Letter to Those Who Support Mumia's Innocence

Date: 4/28/08

By Jamal Hart

Before I begin, let me thank everyone here today who came out [April 19, 2008: National Mobilization on behalf of Mumia Abu-Jamal] to take a strong stand against this grotesque insidious judicial court ruling against Mumia Abu-Jamal's liberation. I greet you all in solidarity with the greetings As-Salaam Alaikum and Hotep to all of you who refused to be deceived by these fallacious lies.

Comrades, this is a crucial time that we must unite with various Black labor forces, union representatives and workers, the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, all chapters of the Partisan Defense Committee, and the many other organizations that are continuing the fight against this unjust decision. This is an open letter to those liars that must be exposed and brought to justice by the people. Why? This mendacious government constantly continues to cover up their disgusting acts of malfeasance. It reads as follows:

Dear Liars and the So-Called Powers that Be

We the people are well aware of your treacherous lies that you deceivingly exploit at an innocent man's life. You will do anything to protect these fallacious schemes from coming to light. That said, you know that if you don't, you will be destroyed politically. From the start, the Philadelphia Police Department knows that Mumia is innocent.

Everyone will be able to go on their way without these corrupted cops facing a Federal case, no cop witnesses took the stand in front of a grand jury against the well-known corruption of the police department for numerous unlawful acts such as extortion, gambling, payoffs, bribery, etc. It was just a normal red light district in the City of Brotherly Love. Oh, I almost forgot: This is where officer Daniel Faulkner came in and probably would have made a great snitch. Yeah, the plot thickens quickly huh?

Courtesy of Hans Bennett

Demonstration by supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal in Paris, France demanding that Mumia receive a fair trial.

How could you look at yourselves after a collusive plot was placed on one of your own?

The year was 1981, going into 1982. Months later, the Federal Jury returns a decision of guilty. How did you pull it off? Or, was there so many involved no one can talk for fear of a publicized investigation? Any Black you picked was good for you? In your eyes, Mumia was a better catch huh? A very articulate journalist fearlessly speaking out against oppression against the poor and working class Blacks of Philadelphia. A vigorous researcher that isn't easily deterred and had Philly's ear via WDAS FM covering local news and issues such as police brutality, ruthless Black on Black crime in the ghettoes, police corruption, and crooked corrupt politics governed and allowed by the renegade Mayor Frank Rizzo. Rizzo himself publicly stated that the police

Continued on page 14

The entire Month of October celebrates the BPP 42nd Anniversary

Down Memory Lane

35th Anniversary of the Oakland Community School

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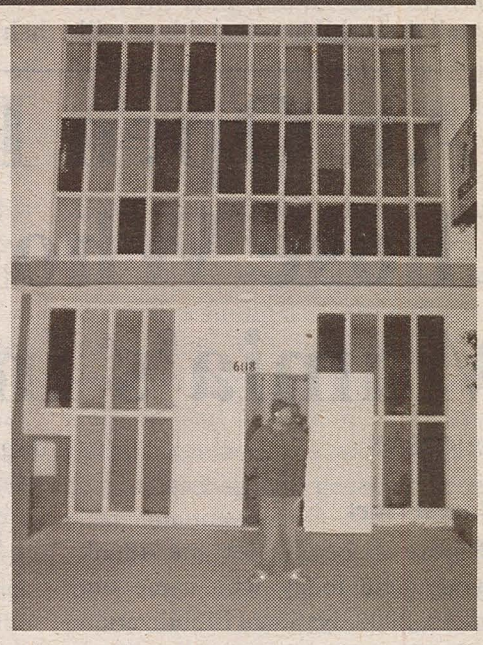

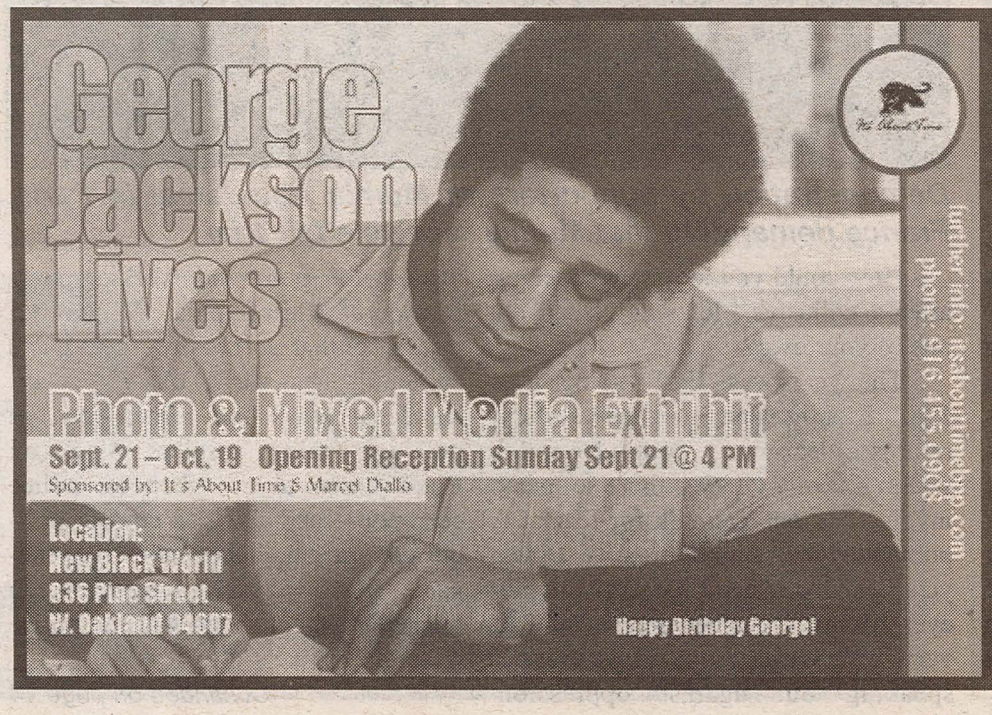
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First in 27 years

Hundreds attend OCS Reunion

Photo by Neome Marko-Banks

Black Panther Party's Oakland Community School alumni members regroup at Dimond Park after 27 years. So now it is time to gear up for the October 25 "Down Memory Lane Tour" beginning at 6118 International Blvd., Oakland.

On Saturday, July 19, at Oakland's Dimond Park, nearly one hundred former students of the original Black Panther Party (BPP) Oakland Community School (OCS) joined with more than 350 people from the community along with BPP alumni, members of It's About Time and Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) volunteers, to celebrate the legacy of the original Black Panther elementary school, founded in Oakland in 1973. The Oakland Community School provided children an accredited elementary school educational program, connected with a food program, political education, teen program and martial arts through the BPP Oakland Community Learning Center. The last graduating class was in 1981; the Learning Center remained active until 1982.

Old classmates reunite after 10, 20 and 30 years

The event was the first reunion specifically organized to bring together former students since the school's closing 27 years ago. Former OCS students and staff were overtaken with the rapture of the July reunion as they talked with old classmates that they had not seen, in many cases, for 10, 15, 25, or 30 years.

When the Oakland Community School opened its doors in East Oakland in 1973, the black middle school academic achievement level was under 70% of white middle-school academic achievement level, according to the Oakland Census. Today a significant percentage of the former OCS students – who were eight to twelve year-olds when they attended the school – are professionals, teachers, educators, attorneys, entertainers, actresses and artists.

Oakland Community School Reunion Committee (OCSRC)

The summer event was coordinated by the recently formed Oakland Community School Reunion Committee (OCSRC) that was organized by former OCS student Neome Marko-Banks with Ericka Huggins, Lorene Johnson and CCBPP Chairman Melvin Dickson.

CCBPP volunteers participated in the July OCS Reunion picnic celebration, helping to make it a success. The July event followed CCBPP saluting the legacy of OCS at its February 17 Tenth Annual Black History Labor College Celebration – a benefit for L'il Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign, held at the historic site of the Oakland Community School on International Boulevard in East Oakland.

Dickson coordinated an information table at the July festivities to make the reunion attendees aware of CCBPP's need for volunteers and encouraging their personal participation in the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign.

All Power to the People

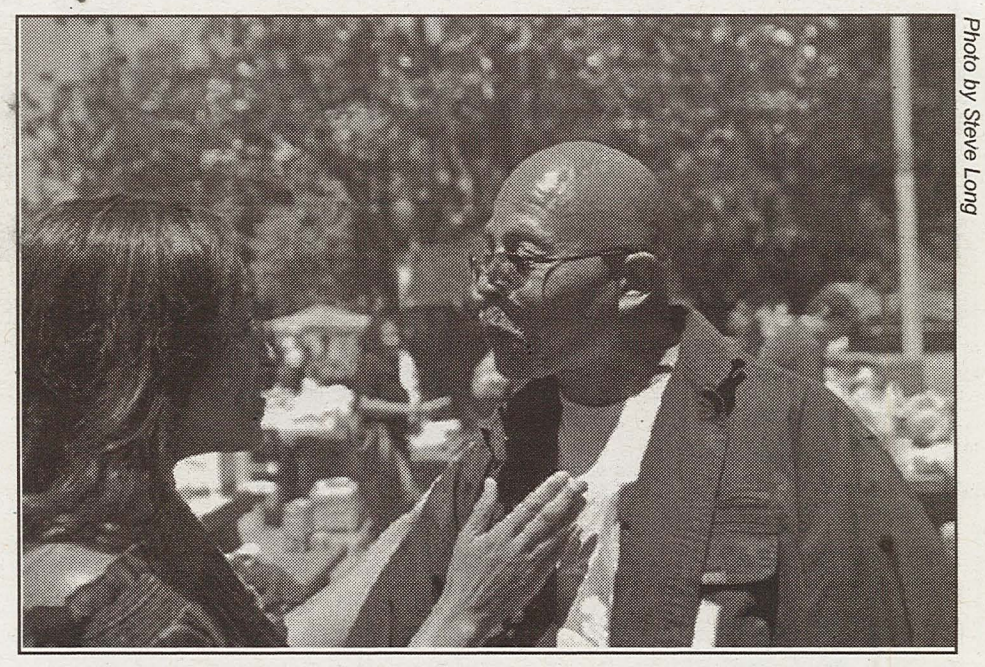
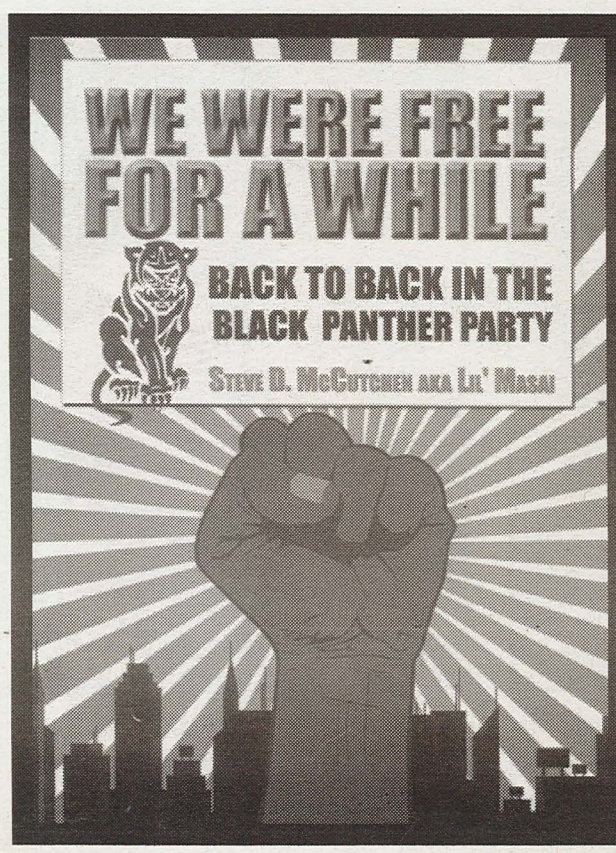


Photo by Steve Long

Kellita Smith, a former OCS elementary student, now a professional actress who starred in the* Bernie Mac Show *in the role of Wanda for ten years, greets her former math and martial arts teacher, Steve McCutchen, at the July Reunion in Dimond Park.

McCutchen, a former BPP member who is today an east Oakland middle school math teacher, recently published his memoir:* We Were Free For A While*, describing his experience and perspective as a full-time cadre and organizer to BPP goals and principles responsible to the organization.

Kellita Smith graduated from OCS elementary school in 1980. Smith was introduced to the camera as an eight and a half year-old student who got the opportunity to interview Huey P. Newton in 1977 upon his return to the United States from exile. The filmed interview with Newton was produced by actor and director, Lavar Burton.



"This book is a journey, taken from journal entries, letters and memories, that moves among the black men and women of the Black Panther Party who thumbed their noses at the powers that be and who lived and died believing that we were free for a while."

"The staff of the Oakland Community School, our model elementary school, were indefatigable."

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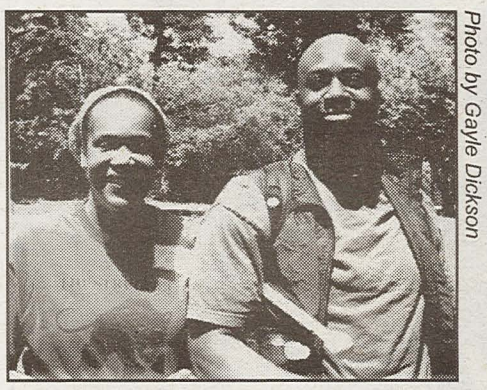

Photo by Gayle Dickson

OCS alumni Theresa Williams and James Banks, both graduated from OCS.

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At Reuni

In 1973 the Oakland Community School (OCS) was started by the Black Panther Party and it promulgated the concept –

"Each One, Teach One"

BPP Archives

Heidi Freeman, Kellita Smith and Rona Means were students at OCS thirty years ago.

BPP Archives

Oakland Community School students during performances in the theater in 1977. "Remembering our roots" *was a play written and performed by the children themselves.*

BPP Archives

Steve McCutchen was the martial arts instructor at OCS throughout the program in the 1970s.

BPP Archives

The high spirit of the children's drive to learn was a driving force for the program.

Photo by Gayle Dickson

Ruth Villa Jones, a founding member of BPP's SAFE program, celebrated her 102nd birthday as a special honoree at the OCS picnic reunion.

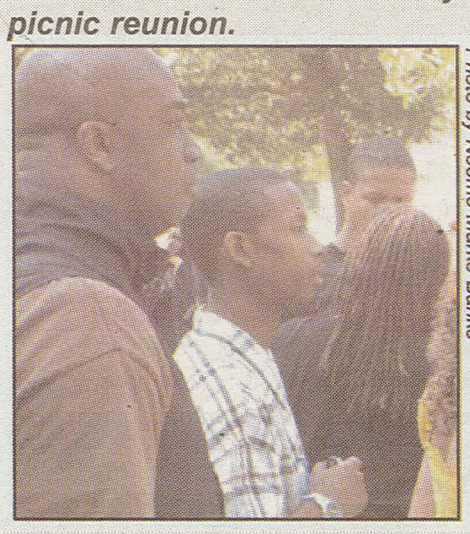

Photo by Neome Marko-Banks

OCS former students, James Banks (left) and Cullen Robinson at July 19 celebration.

Photo by Gayle Dickson

Emory Douglas, revolutionary artist, serves food at OCS reunion.

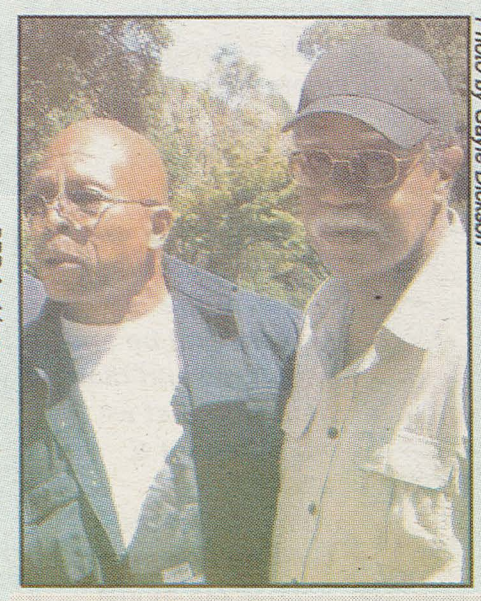

Photo by Gayle Dickson

Former OCS staff members Steve McCutchen (left) and Olando Vaughn enjoy the picnic reunion.

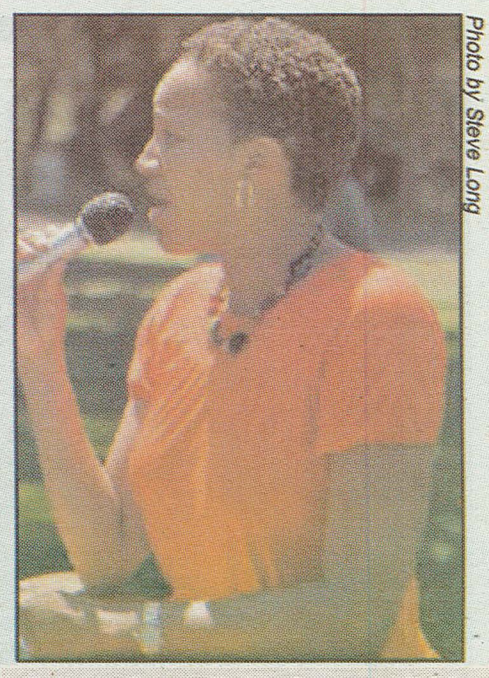

Photo by Steve Long

Ericka Brumfield, former OCS student, spoke about how OCS helped shape her life as a teacher and educator at a local high school.

nts, Staff Members Reaffirm Purpose on Picnic

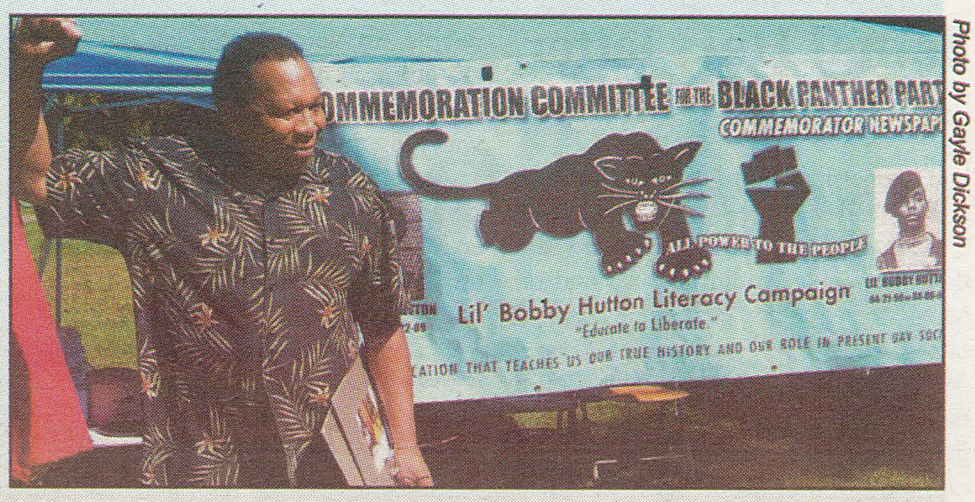
OMMEMORATION COMMITTEE FOR THE BLACK PANTHER PART
COMMEMORATOR NEWSPAP
ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE
Lil' Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign
"Educate to Liberate."

Photo by Gayle Dickson

CCBPP Chairman Melvin Dickson helped organize the reunion and set up an information table to promote The Commemorator and the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign.

Photo by Neome Marko-Banks

Former OCS teacher and BPP member, Gayle (Asali) Dickson (right), holding granddaughter Anelisa, daughter Cindy (center) and Gayle's son, Aaron with granddaughter, Isandla (left).

Photo by Neome Marcko-Banks

Former OCS classmates: Juan Contreras, Ronnie Brooks aka "Money-B"/Digital Underground, Kellita Smith ("Wanda"/Bernie Mac Show), Kiesha Hackett and Eric Smith.

Photo by Neome Marko-Banks

Vivette Miller, a former OCS teacher and parent.

Photo by Gayle Dickson

Jenette Keys with great-grand daughter at Dimond Park picnic.

Courtesy of OCS

Neome Marko-Banks, former OCS student and organizer of the OCS Reunion.

Photo by Gayle Dickson

Ericka Huggins, OCS Director and lead administrator, talked about the history and development of OCS.

Photo by Steve Long

Erica Watkins speaks about how OCS prepared her for today's challenges as a professional teacher.

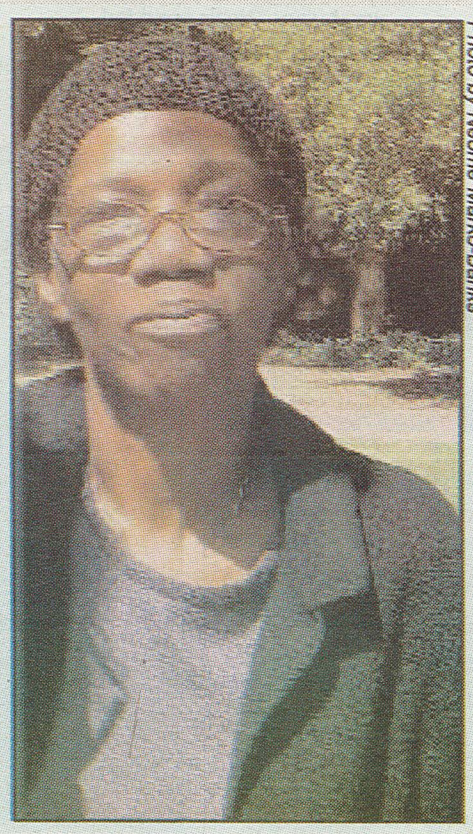

Photo by Neome Marko-Banks

Lorene Johnson, former OCS Secretary and BPP member, coordinated food and logistics for the event.

Photo by Gayle Dickson

Steve Long, former OCS teacher, and BPP member, attends the reunion.

Photo by Hoyt Fay

Donna Howell, OCS co-director, speaks to the audience about her history with OCS.

Jamal Hart letter

Continued from page 9

had his permission to "Shoot First and Ask Questions Later".

You didn't think in a million years that the people would take a stand on Mumia's behalf and challenge your fallacious lies. Fast Eddie Rendell and Joseph McGill were so impaired on a racist level. They are extremely incompetent and sickening. They knowingly railroad Mumia from start to finish with deliberately unruly nepotism by Judge Sabo. You dramatically created this vengeance theory straight out of a Charles Bronson tale by standing over the body execution style activating the passion of the rigged jury.

You fallacious liars know that there is no evidence that Mumia shot Daniel Faulkner. You fictitiously generated the whole story. Let the truth be told that Mumia's trial was rigged from the start to finish and your kangaroo courts ignored his claims of innocence that he always made clear. Let's break this down to refresh your memory:

Mumia stated that he was innocent on July 3, 1982. He gave a sworn declaration on May 3, 2001 truthfully detailing what he saw that night. However, once again, you had no intention in believing him. You disregarded the truth and you had the audacity to cover it up with more lies. You good ol' boys know for a fact that Arnold Beverly, NOT MUMIA, killed Officer Faulkner that night. You refuse to free an innocent man and you refused to observe Beverly's sworn affidavit detailing how he killed Faulkner into any active courtroom. I find that very menacing. It is obvious the masses and to myself that you know your nature of creating false statements to cover up the truth and you have a history of this. Here is a living person stating that he NOT MUMIA killed a law enforcement official and there is NO HEARING?! UNBELIEVABLE!

These dreary undisputed facts are overlooked evidence by these mendacious court justices who display a blind eyed lack of integrity on justice. We the people are not seeking a new trial. The mountains of clear and convincing evidence that proves Mumia's innocence clearly shows our position that my dear father needs to be exonerated NOW! From the gulags of death row inside the belly of the beast, my father still believes in the power of the people. So, your sinister acts of racism are going in one ear and out the other. The people around the world are watching this catastrophe very closely.

In closing, I end this open letter by saying this: Your barbaric insidious actions are not being taken lightly. They are recorded. Even amongst yourselves, nothing is sacred. You cannot outfox us. We are clear of your conniving, vile nature even if you've forgotten that the people can make the structure but they can destroy it too. Your police state is intimidating to some but many question your illusion of power.

I, Mr. Jamal Hart, continue to keep my eyes on the sparrow and grow from behind the razor wires of FCI Loretto. There will be a time when you are confronted by your demons. Until then, be clear that we will NOT give in. Never have, never will. If that's what you're waiting for, don't hold your breath! This outrageous atrocity will be exposed by the people because they will continue to fight for Mumia's exoneration.

We will not step aside and let this government terror machine hang over death row waiting to execute an innocent political prisoner. You can hide for a little while but your time is running out! The people should not fear the Government. The Government should fear the people!

Comrades, these liars must be exposed for their gross negligence of intentional misconduct by executing a man they KNOW is innocent because HE DID NOT DO THIS CRIME. ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY! FREE MUMIA NOW!

All Power to the People

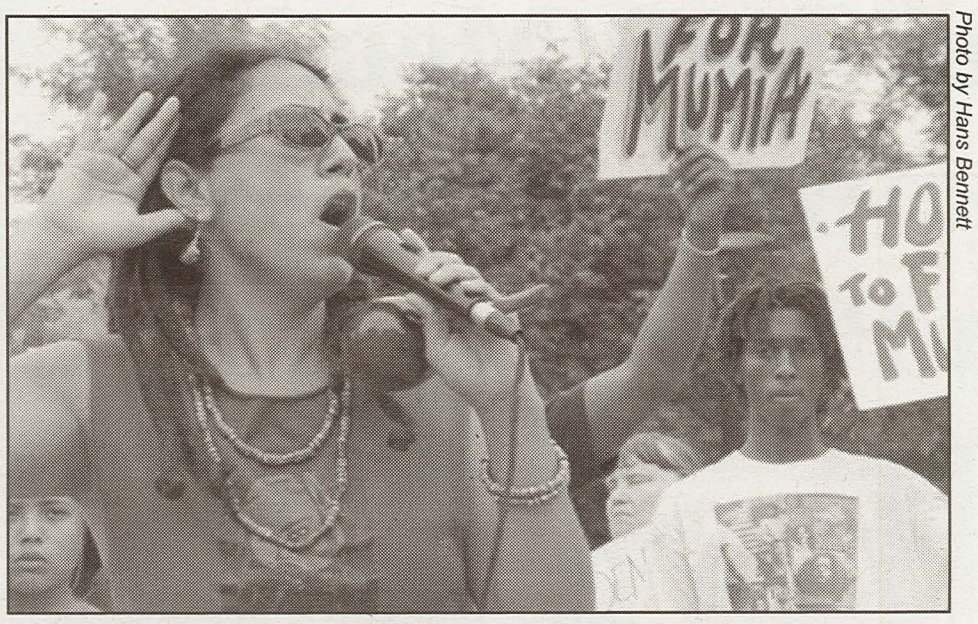

Photo by Hans Bennett

Taina Asili addresses a demonstration on July 4th by supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal in Philadelphia demanding Justice for Mumia.

Subway Guitars

(Steve)

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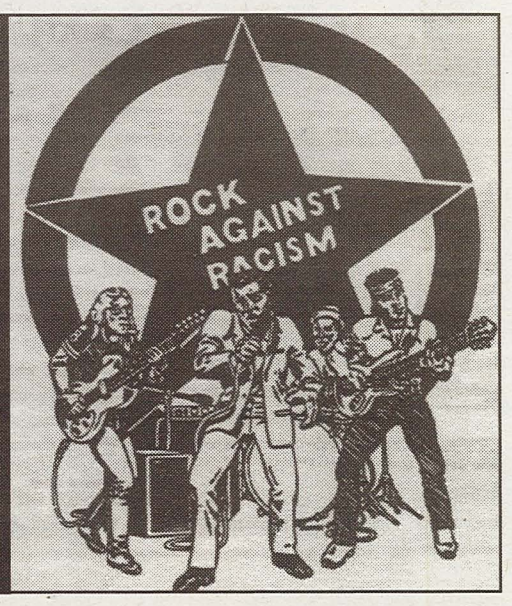

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The CCBPP would like to thank the following volunteers for their support and participation in helping to keep the BPP legacy alive:

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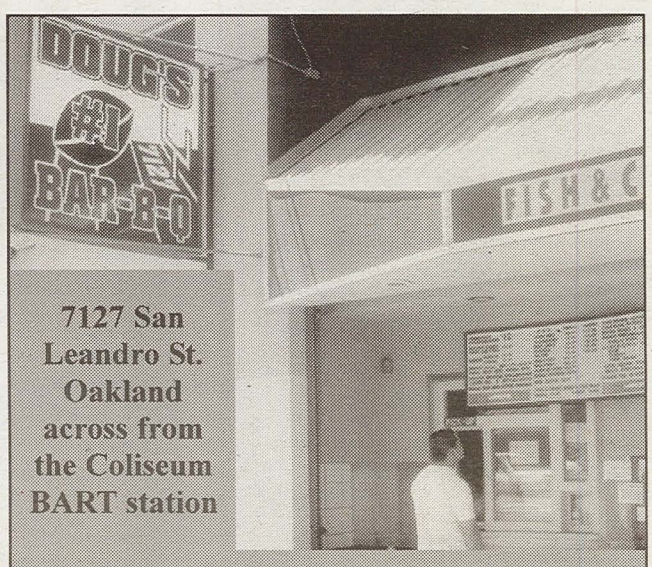
L.V. Ali
Kay-C Allen
Dorothy Bordenave
Perlie Jacobs
Bobby Coleman
Madeline Coleman
Emory Douglas
Matthew Enpaz
Dave Heller
Eseibio Halliday
Gregory Kalkamis
Annie Kane
Jeff Krohn
Marlene Krohn
Neome Marko-Banks
Frances Moore
Barbarette Newton
Melvin Newton
Opal Pound
Tom Sanders
Larry Shoup
Shanrika Turner

BUSINESSES & ORGANIZATIONS

Haiti Action Committee
Black Repertory Group
Community Service United
Copy Central (Solano Avenue, Albany)
Everett and Jones Bar-B-Que
The November Coalition/ Razor Wire
Food Not Bombs
Niebyl Proctor Marxist Library
It's About Time BPP Alumni
San Francisco Act Up



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Pierre Labossiere Haiti Action

Continued from page 8

agricultural country. You have a large population of mostly peasants – about 80% at that time – and they depended on the land. So they invested in livestock – in goats, cattle and pigs. Various sectors of this livestock production were wiped out, but the most concrete example is the pig population. USAID claimed that in order to protect Haitian agriculture from swine fever, the entire pig population had to be wiped out. In one year, all the pigs were destroyed. In 1982, this conservatively represented about $600 million in losses for Haitian peasants.

They promised to send replacement livestock, but they didn't. Those few pigs that came were called 4-footed princes because you had to put them on a concrete floor, and you had to have a roof for them. You had to feed them a high-protein diet which the Haitian peasants couldn't afford. And they had to go to the doctor. The Haitian peasants didn't have doctors for themselves, let alone for their pigs. So that was a complete failure. But it was calculated to reduce the capacity of the people to feed themselves.

When we look at the history of the Native Americans in this country, one of the ways to subjugate a people is to attack their food source. When I read about the ruthless slaughter of the buffalo, what comes to mind is what happened to the Haitian pig.

Also in Haiti at that time, we had a thriving sugar industry which produced sugar for local consumption. A large sugar mill used to be a major employer in my own hometown. But sugar was privatized and the next thing you know, it was shut down and the entire sugar industry was completely wiped out. Now Haitians have to rely on the Dominican Republic for sugar.

The same thing happened with rice. Until the 1980s, Haiti was self-sufficient in rice production. But with the lowering of tariffs, again Haitians got what we call "Miami" rice. Haiti was flooded with cheap rice imports and Haitian peasants couldn't compete. This rice wasn't grown by small farmers. This was subsidized rice made by powerful corporations that receive a lot of US government money. They could afford to bring rice to Haiti at a much lower price so they could destroy local production. Now that there is no competition on the ground in Haiti, rice prices have skyrocketed.

The LAVALAS movement grew out of a spirit of resistance to this neo-liberal plan. What people in Haiti call "plan lanmo," or the death plan. Haitians saw it is a plan to kill off our people. So they resisted. And so you have the development of this powerful grassroots movement that got rid of Baby Doc Duvalier. It got rid of a number of other governments from 1986-1990. The people were clear what they wanted.

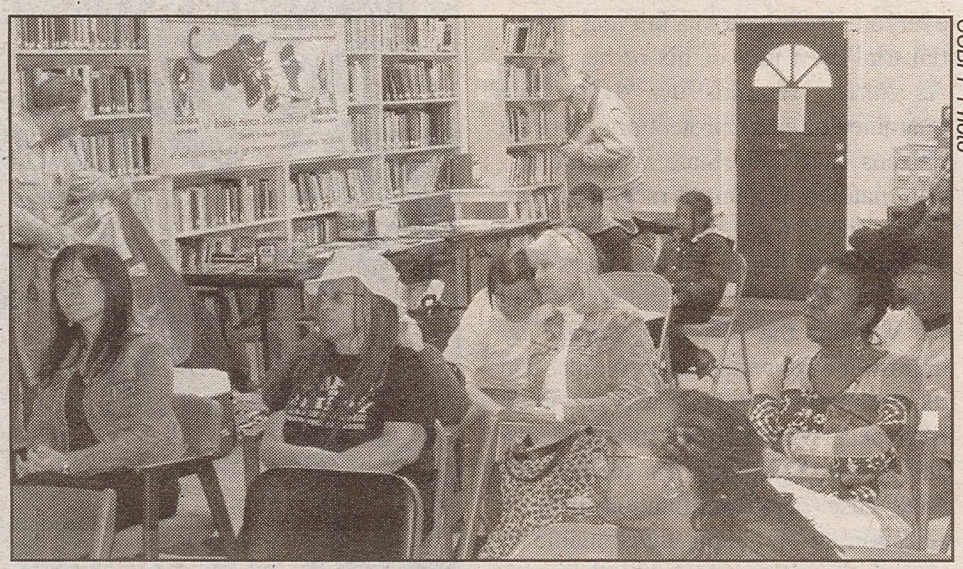
That's where the LAVALAS movement comes from and that's exactly where LAVALAS is today. It is a platform to retake Haiti, to stop this death plan from crushing our brothers and sisters, to invest Haitian resources in Haiti. Haiti has numerous resources. Haiti has iridium, copper, and numerous shipwrecks off the coast that are loaded with gold. And they know this.

One of the powerful spokespersons of that movement [the LAVALAS movement] was a young priest called Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide. And Aristide said to them, "If you want those resources, you negotiate. We can negotiate a fair price, but you are not coming to take it." Hence the coups d'etat that took place, the continued assault to destroy the movement, the resistance of the people. The United Nations you see in Haiti today is a part of this agenda to impose neo-liberalism on Haiti, no different than what Pinochet did in Chile. That was exactly why the coup took place in Chile – in order to impose what they call the neo-liberal plan to destroy any kind of social programs, education, to open it to market forces. We are talking about imposing a monopolistic, predatory agenda on a people – either they accept it or if not, they starve.

What is possible? The LAVALAS government of President Aristide put into place some models of development. For instance, the ARISTIDE FOUNDATION was addressing this problem by investing in infrastructure, road construction, sources of water so that the peasants could once again have the tools in their hands to plant, to increase food production and to renew the agriculture of Haiti. That is why they asked for loans from the Inter-American Bank for Development. But the US government actually blocked those loans from being disbursed. And Partners in Health and the Robert F. Kennedy Center just reported that, to this day, those loans have not been released.

Now the United Nations is in Haiti. They have a budget of $575 million a year for their 10,000 personnel in Haiti. And they are not addressing any of these issues. The US, France and Canada are there. They've been there for four years. And yet we have the worst food crisis ever in Haiti on their watch. And these are the experts!

I see the infrastructure that's put in place in California. When the farmers produce their food, it is preserved and distributed quickly. They know how to make this work efficiently, yet with every Haitian progressive government from 1991 to 2004, they have blocked them, overthrown them, and prevented them from developing Haiti's infrastructure. It's one thing to produce the food, but you have to be able to preserve and distribute it very quickly. When Jesse Helms blocked the money that was going to road construction, he knew exactly what he was doing. When they blocked the money going into developing sources of water, for clean drinking water for the health of our people and also for irrigation, they knew what they are doing. It's no different than what they've done before – using food as a weapon to crush the peoples' movement.



CCBPP Photo

On April 19, in solidarity with CCBPP, the Haiti Action Committee showed the video "Bitter Cane" describing conditions in Haiti during the regime of Papa Doc.

I want to appeal to you. There are things we can do. One is to dispel this myth that Haitians cannot do for themselves. People anywhere in the world can do for themselves. It makes me laugh but it's an angry laughter when I see people go to Haiti bringing rice to do a photo op with some hungry child. I'm not opposed to people providing some food, and I encourage all of you who are members of organizations who want to work with the people of Haiti who are facing starvation. However, we cannot just stop at giving somebody a bit of rice, taking a picture, showing how beautiful we are, and attracting more money for our own aggrandizement. You've got to enter into the struggle of our people for liberation.

Haitians are not trying to get a bit of rice as a handout. They want a government of the people to enact a program for the development of the country. They want to be respected. You've got to take it a step beyond just providing a little food. Accompany them, be with the brothers and sisters in their struggle, fight with them so they can take over the reins of their own government, so that their priorities count, so the resources of the country can be put at their disposal, so they can develop and govern their own country.

My dad used to tell me that when he was a boy, in the early 1900s, Haitians used to send money to China. People would collect funds in the schools to send to China. At the time, China was looked down upon. Later, every time he heard China was a world power, he was astounded. So Haiti used to send food and money to China! What happened? Well, what happened was China rose up, had a revolution and started saying these are our priorities, this is what we want, these are the priorities of our people.

In Haiti today, people are fighting once again to take the reins, to be in control of their own destiny. In that way, Haitians will control our country, build schools and healthcare centers and feed our children.

All Power To The People

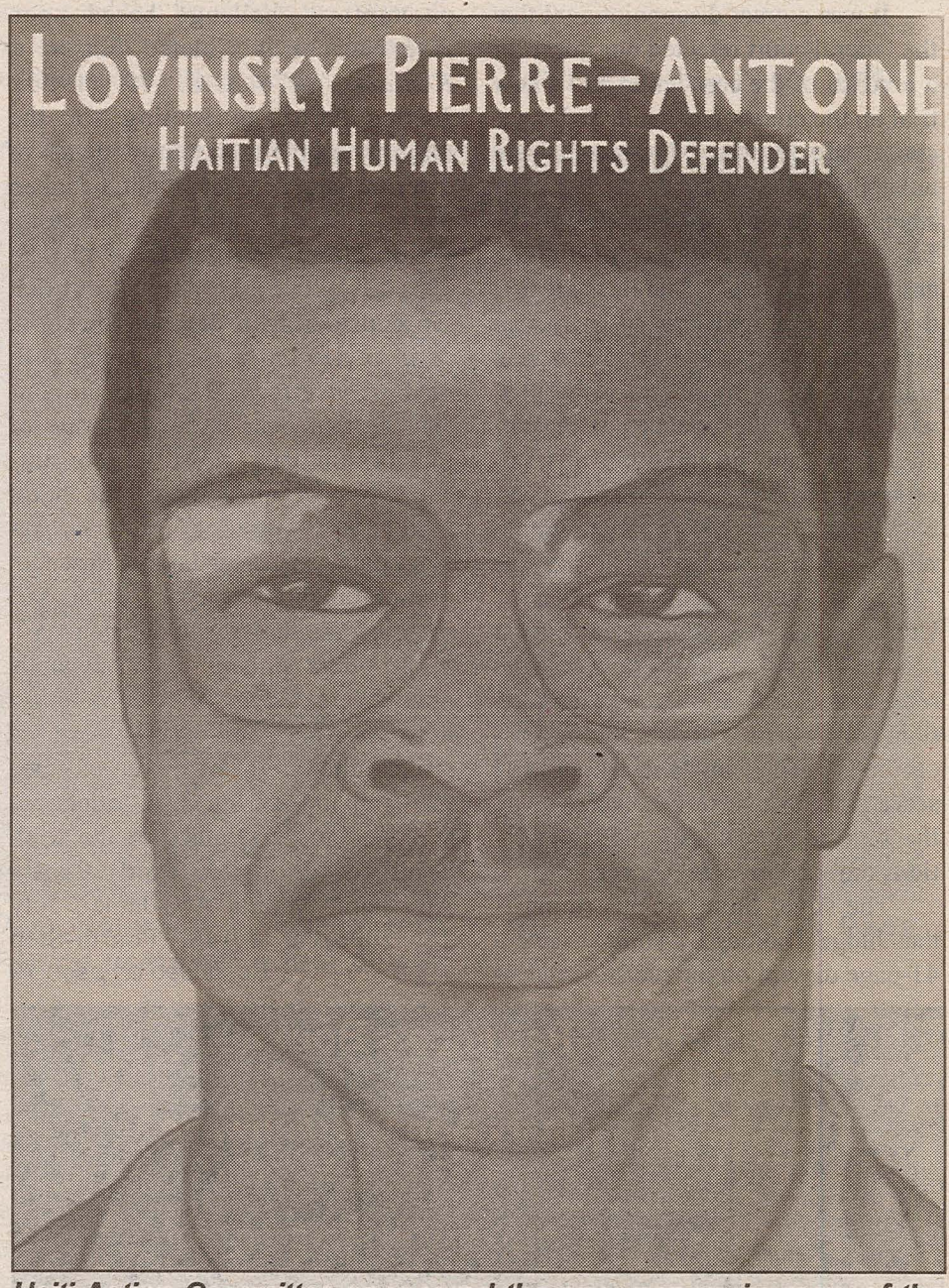


Illustration by Nia Imara

Haiti Action Committee sponsored the one-year anniversary of the disappearance of Dr. Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine. A militant human rights activist, Dr. Pierre-Antoine is a strong advocate against the imperialistic occupation orchestrated by the United States.

Mumia Update

Continued from page 1

our reaction and position concerning recent legal developments, and what will happen now. This should answer many of those questions and alleviate some of the confusion.

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, Philadelphia

As widely reported in the media, the U.S. Court of Appeals issued its long-awaited decision on March 27, 2008. (*Abu-Jamal v. Horn*, Nos. 01-9014, 02-9001, 2008 WL 793877 (3rd Cir. 2008).) Mumia and I had legal conferences that day, and we have been in frequent contact since including a death-row meeting earlier this week and a discussion this evening. We view the opinion of the three-judge panel as a mixed bag with some good, some very wrong, and a remarkable dissenting opinion by a judge on racism that gives us great hope for eventual victory.

A new jury trial has been ordered by the federal court on the question of whether Mumia should be sentenced to life or death, due to the trial judge's unconstitutional and misleading instructions to the jury. It is a positive step in any capital case when a court finds that the death penalty was wrongfully imposed. Mumia is pleased with this part of the ruling because it could help others on death rows across the U.S. The prosecution now has various options including seeking reconsideration by the federal court and petitioning the U.S. Supreme Court to have the death sentence remain intact.

It was a great disappointment that the federal court rejected our quest for a reversal of the conviction and a new trial on the question of guilt and innocence. To say that Mumia and I are unhappy with this, would be an understatement, for the decision flies in the face of the United States Constitution and case precedent. The facts are that the prosecutor did engage in racism during jury selection, and made a false and misleading argument to the jury, which turned the concept of reasonable doubt and presumption of innocence on its head. The trial judge was biased and bigoted, even stating in reference to my client that he was "going to help 'em fry the nigger." Unfortunately the court used against Mumia the failings of the lawyers who represented him in state post-conviction and federal habeas corpus proceedings. Their mistakes should not serve as an excuse to rationalize away the fundamental constitutional violations that occurred in this case.

The silver lining of this ruling is that Judge Thomas L. Ambro wrote a 41-page dissent on the racism-in-jury-selection issue. This brilliant opinion began: "Excluding even a single person from a jury because of race violates the Equal Protection Clause of our Constitution. See *Batson v. Kentucky*, 476 U.S. 79, 84-86, 99 n. 22, 106 S.Ct. 1712, 90 L.Ed.2d 69 (1986). This simple justice principle was reaffirmed by our Supreme Court this past week. *Snyder v. Louisiana*, No. 06-10119, 2008 WL 723750, (Mar. 19, 2008)."

Justice Ambro concluded that everyone is entitled to a fair and impartial trial by a jury of his or her peers. As *Batson* reminds us, "[t]he core guarantee of equal protection, ensuring citizens that their State will not discriminate on account of race, would be meaningless were we to approve the exclusion of jurors on the basis of... race." *Id.* at 97-98. "I fear today that we weaken the effect of *Batson* by imposing a contemporaneous objection requirement where none was previously present in our Court's jurisprudence and by raising the low bar for a *prima facie* case of discrimination in jury selection to a height unattainable if enough time has passed such that original jury records are not available. In so holding, we do a disservice to *Batson*. I respectfully dissent."

Shortly before the decision, we brought the *Snyder* decision to the attention of the federal court in a Notice of Supplemental Authority. I wrote on March 23, 2008: In *Snyder v. Louisiana*, 2008 WL 723750 (March 19, 2008), the judgment of the Louisiana Supreme Court was reversed with the United States Supreme Court holding that the trial court should have disallowed a peremptory challenge based upon race because it violated *Batson v. Kentucky*, 476 U.S. 79 (1986). Justice Alito, in writing for the majority, reaffirmed that evidence of discriminatory intent should be taken from a broad array of factors. Citing *Miller-El v. Dretke*, 545 U.S. 231, 239 (2005), he pointed out that "in considering a *Batson* objection, or in reviewing a ruling claimed to be *Batson* error, all of the circumstances that bear upon the issue of racial animosity must be consulted..." *Snyder* underscores the point made by Appellee and Cross-Appellant, Mr. Abu-Jamal, urged in oral argument on May 17, 2007, and in briefing, that the existence of a *prima facie Batson* claim depends upon, *inter alia*, the connection between race and the pattern of strikes, the nature of the case, comments made during jury selection, and the time and place of the trial. Brief of Appellee and Cross-Appellant, Mumia Abu-Jamal, July 26, 2006, at 17-46; Fourth-Step

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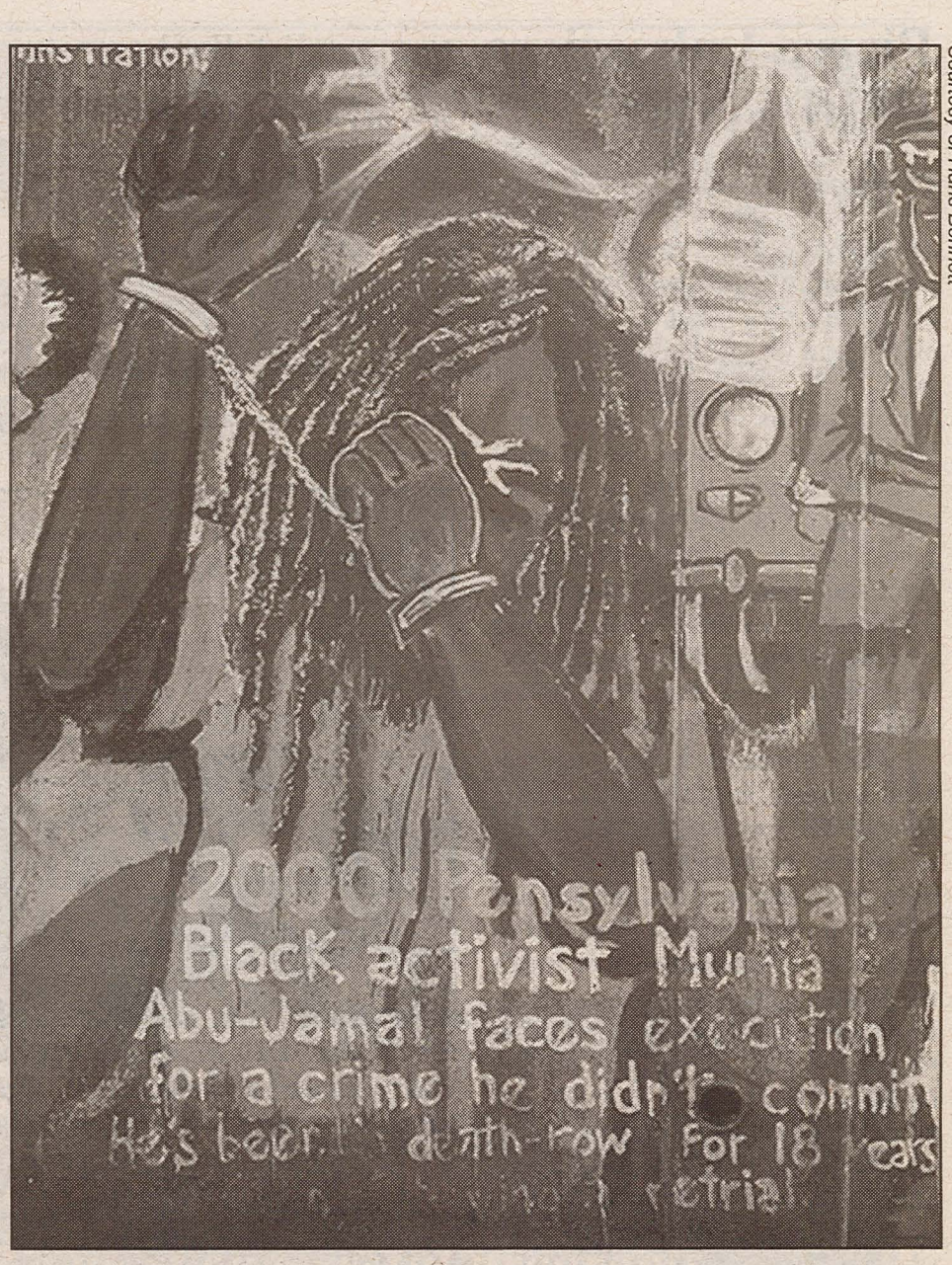

Courtesy of Hans Bennett

Mumia, like many Black activist youths of his generation, had become aware of the teachings of revolutionary martyrs such as Malcolm X, Nat Turner and Robert Williams. He joined the Black Panther Party. For this he was targeted by the FBI.

The Case Against Mumia: Background

By Commemorator Staff

The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal (Wesley Cook) is an example of racialism in the U.S. court system. Through his writings and his activism, Mumia has been critical of the criminal justice system in this country. "They don't just want my death; they want my silence," he said.

Mumia began his struggle for social justice in his youth in the late 1960s, during the height of Black Panther Party activity.

In 1969, at the age of fourteen, Mumia joined the Philadelphia branch of the Black Panther Party where he began to write news stories in the Philadelphia area through the local party branch paper. Later, Mumia took an assignment in Oakland, California at the party's national headquarters to help produce and distribute the national paper. Before joining the Black Panther Party, Mumia organized a protest and recruited four other black youth to protest a speech being made by arch-segregationist George Wallace at the Spectrum in South Philadelphia. The police attacked the protesters. They were handcuffed and beaten so badly that they had to be taken to the hospital before locking them up.

Mumia, like many activist youths of his generation, had become aware of the teachings of revolutionary martyr Malcolm X whose life and death captured the imagination of many young aspiring revolutionaries. Also, Dr. King had recently died for the same cause to end the racial exploitation and oppression throughout the United States and around the world.

Having protested at his high school to change the name from Ben Franklin High School to Malcolm X High School, Mumia had joined the BPP with a strong desire to end racial exploitation and oppression. The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and a host of other civil rights organizers moved Mumia to take a stand against genocide of the black community.

The Philadelphia police department was under the leadership of police chief Frank Rizzo at that time, and members of that department were responsible for a great number of racially motivated killings and attacks, including a military style attack against the Black Panther Party headquarters in the early 1970's.

The BPP was focusing on building a base of operations through expanding its survival programs in the Bay Area and running members of the party for elected offices including Bobby Seale for Oakland mayor and Elaine Brown for a city council position.

In the meantime, other militant and radical organizations adopted various elements and tactics from the BPP, from armed self-defense tactics to the community survival programs.

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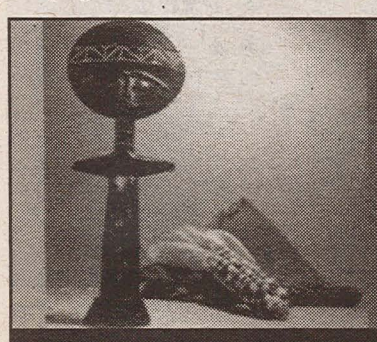
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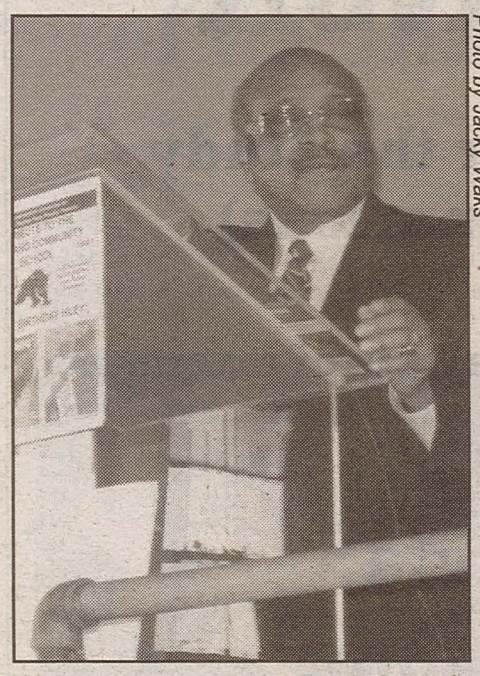

Photo by Jacky Waks

Dr. Melvin Newton gives a key-note address on institutionalized education at Huey's birthday event.

Photo by Jacky Waks

Eseibio Halliday and Robert Emery, CCBPP volunteers, salute "All Power to the People," and "Happy Birthday, Dr. Huey P. Newton," at the Men of Valor Center in east Oakland.

Photo by Jacky Waks

J.R. Valery and Chairman Fred Hampton, Jr. of Prisoners of Conscience Committee (POCC) at Huey P. Newton's birthday celebration in honor of Black History Month.

Photo by Jacky Waks

CCBPP Chair Melvin Dickson introduced Ericka Huggins and Melvin Newton to the audience at the February 17 commemorative event.

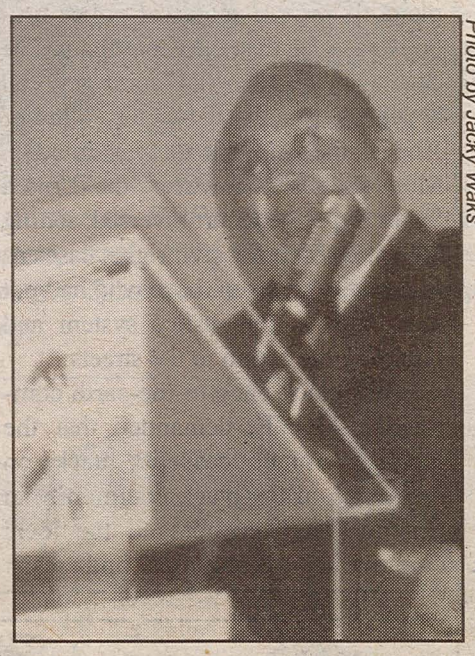

Photo by Jacky Waks

Reverend Don Guest of San Francisco Glide Memorial Church spoke to the homeless crisis at Huey's birthday celebration.

"66!" a man with a deep voice called out.

"His spirit lives on," said Huggins. "All the things that he and Bobby put together in the Ten-Point Program are still relevant," she said.

"What are the Ten Points?" she asked. The crowd then called out points of the program:

"Employment!" one woman yelled.

"No wars of oppression," a man in back shouted.

"Decent housing!"

"Health care!"

"Land, housing, justice, peace," said Huggins. "Not one of those things has changed!"

Huggins said the community school was "a beautiful idea," and talked about the fact that many positive programs came from the Oakland Community School — today the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign, run by CCBPP in South Berkeley, takes inspiration from its legacy.

Dr. Melvin Newton: BPP Platform on education

"'We want decent education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society…' It seems simple, but it is complicated," Dr. Melvin Newton, professional educator, said as he took the stage, quoting Point 5 of the Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program.

Dr. Newton expounded on how some historical "facts" commonly taught in public school, such as Abraham Lincoln "freeing the slaves," are simply false. He pointed out how the very language that is used such as "White lies aren't bad, but a black lie is the worst!" become tools of oppression that we must break.

Homelessness, Poverty and the Housing Crisis addressed by Glide Memorial Pastor

Reverend Donald Guest from Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco spoke about poverty and the housing crisis, "Too much homelessness and too many vacant homes at the same time. God is watching this. If I find myself where I can't pay the rent, where I can't shelter my family, due to a lack of a job, I have no doubt as to what I would do! Will I allow my children to go unsheltered with all those vacant homes? — No way!" He urged the audience to focus on solutions, making sure the community has proper health care, education and literacy.

Destiny Arts, a local dance troop led by Damie Nazapas, captivated the audience with their high-energy performance hip-hopping, cutting it up to the Public Enemy popular tune, "Fight the Power."

"Black Panthers had an international impact!"

J.R. Valery of the Prisoners of Conscience Committee (POCC) gave a speech about how the Black Panthers have inspired people all around the world. He and his group went to Brazil, where they met with members of a newly formed POCC in that country, many of whom knew about Huey Newton. On a trip to Ireland, he met with an IRA member who also had been a fan of the Black Panthers. "The Black Panthers had an international impact," Valery said.

POCC Chairman Fred Hampton, Jr., the son of the late Fred Hampton, who built the Chicago BPP and was murdered in his sleep by the notorious Chicago Police's "Red Squad," came up for an impromptu talk about the legacy of the Panthers.

"It used to be that you had to suit up and boot up to join corporate America, or suit up and boot up to become a gangster," Hampton elucidated. "The Black Panthers offered another option." Places like the Oakland Community School educated students instead of "training" them to conform, he said.

A call to build the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign

Melvin Dickson summed it up, "We cannot study Black History as separate from Labor History. When we do, we fail to be able to use what we are studying as an effective weapon toward organizing for real change."

Dickson spoke of the scourge of illiteracy that is still rampant in our communities. He urged the attendees to organize with CCBPP in bringing the community together to reverse this problem. Kay Allen, one of the tutors of the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy program, and other volunteers ran a CCBPP information table at the event where they asked everyone to sign up to volunteer and support the literacy program.

Throughout this past summer, CCBPP volunteers prepared for the fall schedule of the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign, encouraging adults who had been failed by our public education system to sign up for tutoring in reading and writing – these literacy classes will use materials to study BPP and African-American history as well as current events. Parents can inquire about signing up to participate with their children in CCBPP's youth literacy section.

For more information about how you can participate: As a CCBPP tutor, a learner, and/or an organizer, call 510-652-7170.

All Power to the People

Photo by Jacky Waks

Damie Nazapas (left) leads Destiny Arts, kicking it with Public Enemy's Fighting the Power at the February 17 event.

Mumia Background

Continued from page 16

MOVE (MOVE is not an acronym) was one such group in the Philadelphia black community that continued to organize for human rights, as well as animal rights, and for ending police brutality. They regularly protested and agitated against local police repression. Rizzo had become a national symbol for "Law and Order," following Richard Nixon's program. Rizzo's name had become synonymous with police brutality nationwide in the mid-70s and activists tried to gain recourse through the courts through litigation, bringing class action suits to put his police department under civilian review, proving a pattern of practice of unconstitutional acts by Rizzo and his department. At trial the plaintiffs proved scores of police brutality cases against the department. The case won at the trial court and on appeal to the Third Circuit Court of Appeal, the same one that just ruled on Mumia's case. However, the United States Supreme Court reversed, setting the bar so high for civil rights cases as to dash the hopes of those who had put their faith in the justice system and returning the action to the streets.

The black back-to-the-earth community, MOVE, demanded that the local government cease its attacks on them and on the black community in general. They encouraged the local community to organize and resist racial attacks, especially those orchestrated by the Philadelphia police. Later, in 1985, the black mayor of Philadelphia, Wilson Goode, would authorize the dropping of an aerial bomb on the house inhabited by MOVE members, in the first civilian aerial bombing in the United States.

While the attacks against the low-income community escalated, Mumia attended college, improved his journalist skills, and continued his work in Philadelphia as an activist journalist. Mumia began to write about MOVE's activism, among other topics, in its endeavor to end police brutality. He was also driving a cab to earn a living, as he had a family to support. He was an outspoken activist and co-founded the National Association of Black Journalists..

In the early morning hours of December 9, 1981, Mumia Abu Jamal was working the Center City area to pick up fares. While driving he passed his brother, Billy Cook, who was spread-eagled over the hood of a police car, being beaten with a flashlight by police officer Daniel Faulkner; Mumia immediately stopped to investigate. That is where this case begins, and Mumia has still not had the opportunity to adequately present the story and to bring recent evidence and witnesses to bear that prove his innocence.

The latest decision is one more step in that fight for justice.

All Power to the people

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Mumia Update

Continued from page 16

Reply Brief of Appellee and Cross-Appellant, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Oct. 23, 2006, at 11-58.

The high court also reiterated that "the Constitution forbids striking even a single prospective juror for a discriminatory purpose." *Snyder v. Louisiana*, 2008 WL 723750 at *4 (quoting *United States v. Vasquez-Lopez*, 22 F.3d 900, 902 (C.A.9 1994)). This too was pointed out in oral argument and briefing. Brief of Appellee and Cross-Appellant, Mumia Abu-Jamal, *supra*, at 41-42. Finally, the case recognized that an "inference of discriminatory intent is supported when the prosecution's proffered reasons for striking African Americans do not apply even-handedly to non-African Americans." *Snyder v. Louisiana*, 2008 WL 723750 at *8. Again, this point was presented in oral argument and our briefing. *See, e.g.*, Brief of Appellee and Cross-Appellant, Mumia Abu-Jamal, *supra*, at 32-36.

Mumia is still on death row and in great danger...racism, fraud, politics, and unfairness are threads that have run through this case since the beginning.

The "Mumia Exception"

The latest denial of a new trial to Mumia has been referred to as part of the "Mumia Exception." David Lindorff, a noted investigative journalist and author of *Killing Time: An Investigation into the Death Row Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal*, wrote in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on April 2, 2008, that the "courts have altered the rules just to keep Abu-Jamal on course for death." What Professor Linn Washington earlier dubbed the "Mumia Exception," could not have been more on target.

Reaction of the District Attorney of Philadelphia

The District Attorney appeared livid that the federal court had ordered a new penalty-phase jury trial. At a press conference on March 27, 2008, the day of the decision, she vowed that her office will continue pursuing the execution of my client. Sadly, the prosecution could not resist distorting the truth as it has from the outset over a quarter of a century ago. The DA falsely said that the court "finally decided in its wisdom...that Mr. Jamal was guilty." That is not what the U.S. Court of Appeals found and is nonsense; there was no retrial or verdict. That is not what appellate courts do. Rather, the federal decision dealt with issues of law and procedure. The prosecution's suggestion that my client was found "guilty" of anything on appeal is absurd and patently false.

Where we go from here

The dissent of Justice Ambro is a light in the darkness, a roadmap as to where we go from here. On April 9, 2008, the U.S. Court of Appeals granted my 45-day Motion for Extension of Time To File Petition for Rehearing and Rehearing *En Banc*. The rehearing petition, now due on May 27, 2008, will be seeking review of the case by all the judges in the Third Circuit. [Ed. Note: this petition has now been filed.] The basis will be that "the panel decision conflicts with a decision of the United States Supreme Court or of the court to which the petition is addressed and consideration of the full court is therefore necessary to secure uniformity of the court's decisions," and, "the proceeding involves one or more questions of exceptional importance," (Fed. R. App. P. 35(b)(1).). If unsuccessful, we will proceed to the Supreme Court.

Conclusion

The issues in this case concern the right to a fair trial, the ongoing struggle against the death penalty, and the political repression of a courageous author and journalist. Based upon three decades of successfully litigating murder cases involving the death penalty, I am convinced that we can win an acquittal upon a new jury trial. My goal is his acquittal upon retrial. I intend to see Mumia go home to his family. I will not rest until that occurs.

Mumia is still on death row and in great danger. His life is hanging in the balance. We must remember that racism, fraud, politics, and unfairness are threads that have run through this case since the beginning. As reflected by the comments at its recent press conference, the prosecution has learned little from its shameful behavior in this case. The misconduct continues, and the prosecutorial wrongs of the past are thus visited on the present.

Finally, we are grateful for all those who do so much to bring the injustice in this case to public attention, whether it be through demonstrations, writing to newspapers, meetings, or circulating information on the Internet. This is all important. We are of one voice in this campaign for justice: Free Mumia!

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Lead counsel for Mumia Abu-Jamal

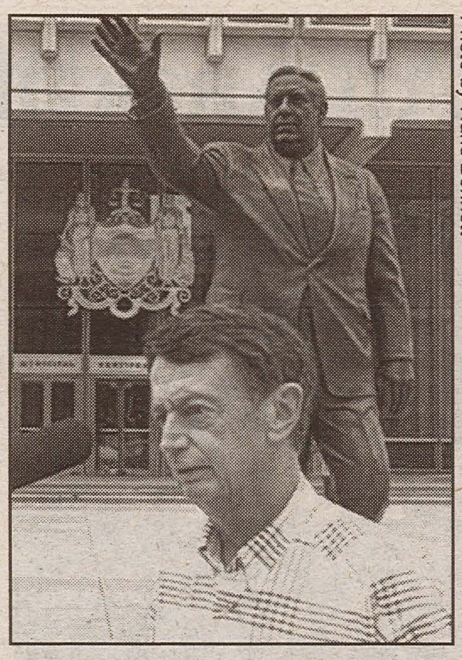

Photo by Hans Bennett

Noted author J. Patrick O'Connor demanding a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal in front of a statue of the notorious Frank Rizzo.

Photo by Hans Bennett

Pam Africa leads demonstration on behalf of Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has been imprisoned for almost 30 years for a crime that he did not commit.

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The Future Has An Ancient Heart

By Professor Lucia C. Birnbaum

The transformational legacy of DNA maternal energies on migration paths out of Africa into Europe and the rest of the world.

NOTE: Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum, is a Professor of Philosophy and Religion, at the M.A. and Ph.D. Program in Women's Spirituality, California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco.

This paper is a draft of my introduction to the above work in progress, a synthesis of the themes and implications of my previous books, and tentative outline of the book in progress. Submerged knowledge, as well as findings of science, and women's spirituality's emphasis on many ways of knowing has informed my research since the 1970s.

In 1977, at the crest of a successful campaign in Italy for the bill decriminalizing abortion, Italian Feminists took me to a women's gathering-place in Rome. Trying to understand Italian Feminists, who seemed very close to my beliefs yet who seemed to know something that this Sicilian American feminist did not, I studied women's notes on the walls. One un-attributed graffito — "the future has an ancient heart" — arrested my attention, where it hovered in a preconscious place of knowing, until three or so years ago when I sought a title for the book I am presently writing.

The phrase, "The future has an ancient heart," is the title of a 1956 book by Carlo Levi, Italian, Jewish writer who had earlier written the classic, Christ stopped at Eboli, *wherein he suggested the ancient subterranean beliefs of people who live in timeless poverty (in this case in the south of Italy)...whose beliefs circle an ancient dark woman. Carlo Levi is now gone. This book, whose title I unconsciously absorbed is a thank you to him for his evocation of submerged knowledge in his life-long fight against arbitrary power, or fascism.*

Since late 2001, when my Dark Mother, of African Origins and Godmothers *was published in the United States, the writings have held a recurrent theme of telling the truth. a theme particularly sensitive to me since I was trained as a historian to tell the truth. Acutely aware as a political and cultural activist since the 1960s, that the truth has often been suppressed, omitted, or distorted by scribes of the dominant culture, it has become, my critics advise, almost an obsession, often inviting hostility. I understood this bodily when my manuscript,* Dark Mother. African Origins and Godmothers, *met a firewall of resistance (and sarcastic letters of rejection) from U.S. publishers, even though my previous books were published by university presses, reprinted in Italy, honored at international conferences, and had received prizes.*

Supported by students and Joseph Subbiondo, president, Mara Keller, director of the program in women's spirituality at California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), Mara danced to the podium. Luisah Teish, African American healer, ritualist, and scholar was present as well, and the book was launched at CIIS in March 2002. I was inaugurated into the international African American educators hall of fame, and given an award by Serpentina. Most custodians of White American culture, however, met Dark Mother African Origins, and Godmothers *with silence.*

In Europe it was warmly received, and translated in 2004 into Italian edition as La Madre O-Scura by the feminist press, Mediterranean Media, at Cosenza, Italy. I was invited to present papers to conferences on feminism, women's studies, prehistory, and Africentrism. In May 2007 it was translated into French and international edition by the African press, Menaibuc Editions in Paris as La Mere Noire and is distributed presently in Africa and the Caribbean. As well as the west.

In the CIIS program in women's spirituality we encourage students to put their work in historical context. In my case, my dual mother-centered and Africa-centered perspectives need to be placed in the context of liberation movements after world war two, when people of former European colonies, notably in Africa, accompanied political work for liberation with cultural work cutting past the lies and distortions of dominant western historians to tell the truth, an enterprise heralded in Africa by Cheikh Anta Diop and by Africana scholars in the United States. In the 1960s, feminists in resurgence believed that telling the truth about women would split the world open, a phrase Ruth Rosen, historian, has taken for the title of her classic study of U. S. feminism. These two movements — that of women and that of the recovery of the truth about African origins — have been the wind at my back in the last several decades.

Late in 1968, I was fired as assistant professor of U.S. history at San Francisco State in that decade's resistance and rising up against the political and cultural violence of dominant elites (who considered themselves white) against those they regarded as dark others. In this longest university strike in U. S. history, students and many professors demonstrated against the U. S. invasion of Vietnam and concurrently demanded (successfully) a black studies department at S. F. State. I began the journey to find out who I am. In chapter two of Future Has an Ancient Heart, *I track my Sicilian ancestors to Africa. Perhaps my greatest scholarly indebtedness is to Italian geneticist and professor at Stanford University, L. Luca Cavalli-Sforza, whom I met after 1987 while I was an affiliated scholar at Stanford in the Institute for Research on Women and Gender. I learned that our human species, Homo sapiens, originated 100,000 BCE in south and central Africa. Cavalli-Sforza and other geneticists have documented African origins of everyone in the DNA as well as documenting in the DNA that African migrants took their beliefs with them when they migrated after 60,000 BCE to every continent. Luca read my Black Madonnas (Northeastern University Press, 1994) and invited me to lunch. I read his History and Geography of Human Genes (Princeton University Press, 1994); he inscribed a copy of his monumental treatise - "uguri per il tuo lavoro cosi originale e coraggioso."*

The primordial beliefs that African migrants took with them throughout the world after 60,000 BCE centered on African black mothers, whose signs, the pubic V and color ochre red, point to the blood of child birth and menstruation, connoting African mothers' generation of life. Subsequently other scholars and I have noted the significance of menhirs and dolmens on African migration paths. Menhirs are upright oval stone figures of a woman; dolmens are rock art of a funerary rite of persons carrying a horizontal dead person. These signs point to the black mother presiding over birth and death. And have helped me to unearth submerged history.

The first religious sanctuary in the world, dated 40,000 BCE, founding place of Judaism~Christianity~Islam at Mt. Sinai, is marked by menhirs, surrealistically incised as humans, created by migrating Africans into the Sinai peninsula. This place, called Mt. Sinai by Jews and Christians and Har Karkom by Muslims, was uncovered by Emmanuel Anati, Italian archeologist and scholar of prehistory who after 1999 invited me to speak to annual interdisciplinary world conferences on prehistoric studies in his archive at Brescia, Italy.

By 25,000 BCE Africans incised Menhirs as women divinities and created settlements on their migration paths throughout the landmass of Asia to which Europe is a promontory. I have tracked these icons of the African woman divinity, that later became icons of black Madonnas in Christian countries and black women divinities elsewhere. My on-site research has focused on islands and regions of the Mediterranean embraced by Africa - islands of Sardinia and Sicily (Mara Keller has studied Crete, other scholars have studied Malta, Cyprus, Balearic islands, et al.). My research has focused on Mediterranean regions (African in origin) that later became nation states, e.g., Spain, France, and Italy where I have familial connection.

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This page is sponsored by Dr. Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum

Mumia Interview

Continued from page 6

around the world in some of the biggest demonstrations in the history of the world. So we're talking about an anti-democratic system. And that can only be changed, not by that system, but by the people.

M1: Good, I would like to say that yesterday we celebrated African Liberation Day, and that's in the memory of Kwame Ture, and also remembering Malcolm X (and his birthday just passed), we see the importance of great organizers who were able to galvanize the best that our people could give to our struggle and to our movement. And also we see the importance of organization. What is your vision of the organization that will defeat imperialism worldwide?

MUMIA: Well, it has to be a global organization. By that I mean the new name of imperialism in the 21st century is really globalization. And when you think about that, when you read about that, when you study about that, globalization really means the globalization of capital. You don't hear people talking about the globalization of labor. But you know that working people all over the world have more in common with each other than they have with their own so-called leaders or the rulers, the ruling class that is, of those societies.

So people should globalize resistance. And that means talking across cultures, learning other languages… Because we need to break through these illusions that the media puts in people's heads.

I mean, there are millions of people who hate people that they have never met. If you mention the name of the president of Venezuela or the president of Iran, people will base their hatred on stuff that they heard on the news. And more likely than not, it was erroneous exaggerations or just straight-up lies. Why should people hate someone that they don't know based on misinformation? You could only do that if you know the role of the media in a capitalist society, which is to support the rule of the rulers, you see?

M1: Great, it's so much to learn. I'm so happy to be soaking this up.

All Power to the People

Angola 3

Continued from page 6

Louisiana prosecutors, who maintain that Woodfox should stay in Angola Prison for the rest of his life, have made no comment since the federal judge's ruling. In November 2006 a state Judicial Commissioner issued a twenty-seven page report recommending the reversal of Herman Wallace's conviction because of new compelling evidence exposing prosecutorial misconduct. After waiting for nearly a year, the local District Court issued a two-sentence ruling rejecting the recommendation. In May, 2008, the appellate court continued to ignore justice by refusing to hear the case in a 2-1 decision without giving reason.

This fall a federal civil rights lawsuit regarding the cruel and unusual punishment ordered regarding these three innocent men goes to trial.

All three Panthers were convicted by all-white juries who believed the testimony of Hezekiah Brown, who was serving a life sentence for aggravated rape when prison officials promised they would help him be released and gave him special favors for testifying against Wallace and Woodfox. In addition to receiving his own house with a TV on prison grounds, money to pay for clemency ads, birthday cakes and other rewards, a prison guard recently testified that he was also given a weekly carton of cigarettes, paid for by the state. Within weeks of Wallace's conviction, Warden Murray Henderson began working to get Brown released and succeeded in 1986.

Yet, the bloody fingerprints at the murder scene did not match any of the inmates charged. At the time of this writing officials are still refusing to check them against the prison fingerprint database to find the real killer. Meanwhile, the widow of the murdered guard is urging state and federal governments to find her husband's killer.

The Angola prison is a 18,000 acre former slave plantation. More than seventy five percent of its over 5,000 inmates are African American. Also, since Louisiana has some of the harshest sentencing practices in the country, eighty five percent will die there.

The prison targeted "The Angola Three" because, although they were not activists upon arriving at the prison, its terrible conditions prompted them to form a Black Panther chapter there. They rallied other prisoners to support their demands for an end to segregation, inadequate medical care, sexual slavery, armed inmate guards and work schedules of 16 hours a day/six days week for only two to four cents an hour (numerous articles and books have been devoted to the rape of women, but none have been published regarding the rape of men, which occurs hundreds of times each night in U.S. prisons).

Angola's system of sexual slavery, where new prisoners were openly bought and sold, was facilitated by the guards, as former warden Murray Henderson admitted in his book Dying To Tell (1992, Center for Louisiana Studies).

Favored inmates were given state issued weapons in order to enforce the sexual slavery and other corrupt prison practices. This resulted from 1972 to 1975 in the deaths of forty prisoners and the serious injury of more than 350.

Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards appointed a prison reformist as Director of the Department of Corrections that resulted in a few reforms being made in the late 1990s. They reduced the workweek from ninety-six to forty hours, and raised the minimum wage from two to four cents an hour. Some are paid as much as twenty cents for harvesting corn, cotton, soybeans and wheat.

Authorities were finally forced to accept the fact that the inmate's work week and low pay was far worse than slavery had been and that Angola's prisoners were working in the nation's chief torture industry – a crucifixion of the nation's Black men.

All Power to the People

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AIDS in Africa: New Plague or Old Illnesses of Poverty?

Racist HIV Myth Hides Ruthless U.S. Exploitation.

Unlike in the United States, AIDS in Africa is most frequently diagnosed based on four very imprecise clinical symptoms—diarrhea, fever, persistent cough, and weight loss greater than 10% over two months. *HIV antibody tests are not required to diagnose a case of African AIDS.* These four clinical symptoms are identical to the problems created by conditions of poverty that have troubled Africa and other developing areas of the world for centuries. In fact, symptoms of the so-called African AIDS epidemic are indistinguishable from the effects of malnutrition, unsanitary drinking and bathing water, and common curable conditions like malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, and parasitic infections.

Rather than solve the problems of African poverty caused by centuries of ruthless Western exploitation, the U.S. government insists on broadcasting the doomsday notion that Africa is suddenly gripped by a deadly, spreading sexual plague. According to these American health authorities, salvation from sickness can only be found in profitable pills manufactured by the white West and exported to black Africa.

America's Racist HIV Myth

The idea that AIDS originated in Africa is a popular myth without any scientific or epidemiological evidence. News reports that blame AIDS on African green monkeys are based upon elaborate speculation about species-jumping viruses rather than reliable proof. Tall tales about the spread of AIDS are promoted through the most vulgar and racist sexual stereotypes about promiscuous African people.

Still, the numbers speak for themselves. According to the 1999 *WHO Global HIV/AIDS Report,* the total number of AIDS cases in Africa virtually equals the total number of cases in America even though Africa, with its 650 million citizens, has more than two times the population of the United States. Africa is often cited as a worst case example of what could happen in America despite figures demonstrating that 99.5% of Africans do not have AIDS, and among Africans who test HIV positive, 97% do not have AIDS.

The Truth About African AIDS:

- **HIV antibody tests are not required for an AIDS diagnosis in Africa.**
- **African AIDS is diagnosed by four very imprecise clinical symptoms:**
  - **— Diarrhea**
  - **— Fever**
  - **— Persistent cough**
  - **— Weight loss greater than 10% over two months**
- **Tuberculosis, malaria, and measles far outnumber cases of AIDS in Africa.**
- **AIDS is not the leading cause of illness or death in any African nation.**

While Africa is the frequent target of damaging AIDS media reports, the total number of cases on the continent is relatively small. For example, from 1981 through 1999 cumulative AIDS cases for South Africa, the area claimed hardest hit by HIV, were just 12,825.

Exporting Extermination: AIDS Pills Kill!

It is undeniable that experimental AIDS treatments like protease inhibitors and AZT are all highly toxic, dangerous products. Strokes, muscle wasting, anemia, physical deformities, dementia, birth defects, organ failure, and death are some of the "side effects" of these poisons. Thousands of gay men in the 1980s and 1990s died from AZT poisoning. Now the U.S. State Department has elevated AIDS to the level of a threat to national security in order to gain public support for exporting AZT to pregnant African women. Outspoken leaders like South African President Thabo Mbeki—hard pressed to explain why developing nations stricken with famine and civil chaos should spend what little money they have on toxic anti-HIV drugs while millions starve—are relentlessly attacked as unfit and crazy by racist Western media outlets.

We invite you to investigate the growing international controversy over the cause and treatment of AIDS for yourself. Clip and mail the coupon below for a free copy of the groundbreaking book *What If Everything You Thought You Knew About AIDS Was Wrong?* by AIDS survivor Christine Maggiore.

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ACT UP San Francisco is the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power—a militant, direct action organization committed to ending the AIDS fraud. General body meetings are held every Monday night at 7:30 p.m. at 1884 Market Street and our medical marijuana dispensary is open 12:00 to 7:00 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Get involved. Join ACT UP! End the abuse of AIDS.

Clip and mail the coupon below to receive a free copy of the book *What If Everything You Thought You Knew About AIDS Was Wrong?* or contact us for more information at www.actupsf.com!

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CCBPP STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) is committed to the goals of the Black Panther Party (BPP) as outlined in its Ten-Point Program which was written in 1966 by Party founders, Dr. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

The Ten-Point Program outlines goals and objectives toward changing conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression in all low-income and working class communities in the U.S. and elsewhere, as the basis for unity and solidarity.

Also, the CCBPP is committed to the concept of Revolutionary Intercommunalism, introduced by Dr. Newton in 1970 at Boston College. Our Revolutionary Intercommunalism holds that there are basically two sides. On one side there is reactionary intercommunalism which presently holds the world's low-income and working communities under conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression by controlling the wealth, resources and institutions in order to maximize profits for the few. Huey identified this side as the leading reactionary side (the ruling class) which consists of a minority, fewer than five percent of the world population. Under these conditions, reactionary intercommunalism, by and large, keeps the poor and working communities on a cycle of degradation, under conditions of reaction, desperation and poverty, with no end in sight. Newton understood that in order to change these conditions and advance the economic and cultural interests of these oppressed communities of the world, disciplined organizations must be built from the bottom up, enabling these low-income and working communities to fight exploitation and oppression by any means necessary (this fight needs to start in the advanced industrialized U.S. because our nation leads the world in political reaction and economic exploitation). CCBPP advances and upholds the goals which the BPP outlined in its Ten-Point Program, and those goals are about ridding black ghettos and low-income and working communities of economic exploitation and political oppression, understanding that we can reach these goals only by seizing the time at the point of practice.

Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program

WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. WE WANT FREEDOM, WE WANT POWER TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that Black and oppressed people will not be free until we are able to determine our destinies in our own communities ourselves, by fully controlling all the institutions that exist in our communities.

2. WE WANT FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE. We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every person employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the American businessmen will not give full employment, then the technology and means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all its people and give a high standard of living.

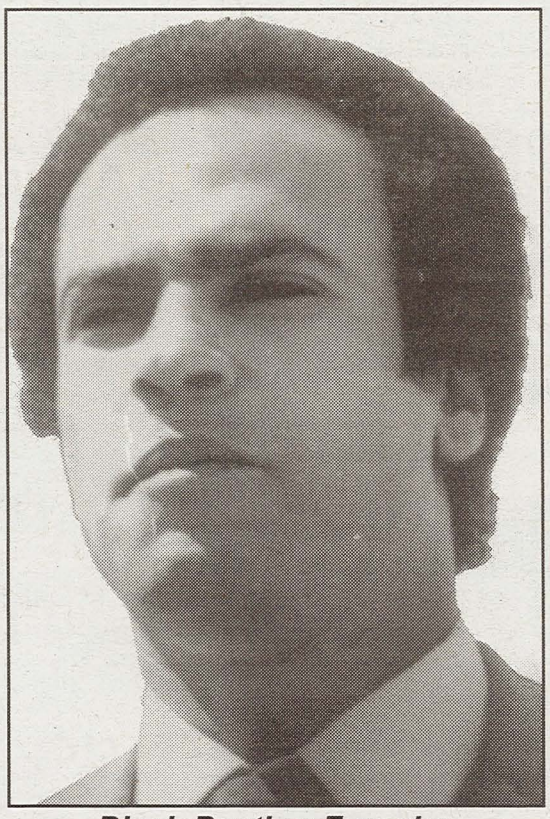
3. WE WANT AN END TO THE ROBBERY BY THE CAPITALIST OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that the racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency that will be distributed to our many communities. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people. Therefore, we feel this is a modest demand that we make.

4. WE WANT DECENT HOUSING, FIT FOR THE SHELTER OF HUMAN BEINGS. We believe that if the landlords will not give decent housing to our Black and oppressed communities, then housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people in our communities, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.

5. WE WANT EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE NATURE OF THIS DECADENT AMERICAN SOCIETY. WE WANT EDUCATION THAT TEACHES US OUR TRUE HISTORY AND OUR ROLE IN THE PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If you do not have knowledge of yourself and your position in the society and the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else.

6. WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. We believe that the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities that will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about as a result of our oppression, but will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.

7. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE BRUTALITY AND MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE, OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR, ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE INSIDE THE UNITED STATES. We believe that the racist and fascist government of the United States uses its domestic enforcement agencies to carry out its program of oppression against Black people, other people of color, and poor people inside the United States. We believe it is our right, therefore, to defend ourselves against such armed forces and that all Black and oppressed people should be armed for self-defense of our homes and communities against these fascist police forces.



Black Panther Founder, Dr. Huey P. Newton

8. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO ALL WARS OF AGGRESSION. We believe that the various conflicts which exist around the world stem directly from the aggressive desires of the U. S. ruling circle and government to force its domination upon the oppressed people of the world. We believe that if the U. S. government or its lackeys do not cease these aggressive wars that it is the right of the people to defend themselves by any means necessary against their aggressors.

9. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL BLACK AND POOR OPPRESSED PEOPLE NOW HELD IN U. S. FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, CITY, AND MILITARY PRISONS AND JAILS. WE WANT TRIALS BY A JURY OF PEERS FOR ALL PERSONS ARE CHARGED WITH SO-CALLED CRIMES UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS COUNTRY. We believe that the many Black and poor oppressed people now held in U. S. prisons and jails have not received fair and impartial trials under a racist and fascist judicial system and should be free from incarceration. We believe in the ultimate elimination of all wretched, inhuman penal institutions, because the masses of men and women imprisoned inside the United States or by the U. S. military are the victims of oppressive conditions that are the real cause of their imprisonment. We believe that when persons brought to trial that they must be guaranteed, by the United States, juries of their peers, attorneys of their choice and freedom from imprisonment while awaiting trials.

10. WE WANT LAND, BREAD, HOUSING, EDUCATION, CLOTHING, JUSTICE, PEACE AND PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CONTROL OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY. When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpation, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism. It is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

The Li'l Bobby Hutton Memorial Statue Benefit

at Club Six

60 Sixth Street, San Francisco (On Six Gallery)

A benefit evening with live music, Black Panther photo exhibit & revolutionary art of Emory Douglas

Begins 8pm on Saturday, November 29

Melvin Dickson CCBPP Chairman will present the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign and how you can participate in promoting the legacy of the Black Panther Party goals and principles to eliminate the root cause of illiteracy across the land.

Performances:

Digital Underground

Marcel Diallo & Black House Jazz Group

BPP Photo Exhibit
BPP CURATOR
William Jennings

The Bobby Hutton memorial that will soon sit in Li'l Bobby Hutton Park (aka DeFremery Park) will serve as one of the few enduring symbols in the United States honoring the Black Panthers. Currently, there are no streets named after Panthers, no statues and no publicly funded institutions. Although Bobby Hutton was the third Black Panther member he is an excellent choice to serve as the first Panther to be immortalized in a statue.

A week before Li'l Bobby's 18th birthday and three days after The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, Bobby Hutton was shot 12 times and killed by a contingent of over 40 Oakland Police officers while standing, shirtless, in flood lights, with his hands in the air in the act of surrendering.

Li'l Bobby started in the movement as little more than a child and in a few short years, he evolved into a well-read, politically aware revolutionary. Li'l Bobby's evolution was repeated thousands of times over, across the nation in the forty-three Black Panther chapters that sprang up in response to Huey P. Newton's call for a generation of fearless Black men and women to step forward and take their place in the front lines of the struggle.

Huey P. Newton stated that the true revolutionary engages in "Revolutionary Suicide" because of the revolutionary's love for the people, which is giving one's life for the liberation of our class versus selfish individualism.

Huey also said, "Revolution is a process, not an event," meaning the revolutionary must fight for freedom while creating a new society that can embody the means necessary to sustain a perpetual post-revolutionary society. Huey's vision was of a new consciousness for Black Americans that would transform future generations to safeguard the hard fought freedoms of the revolution for generations to come.

The Li'l Bobby Hutton statue will stand for everything the Panthers achieved, the dangers they faced, and the sacrifices they made in the enduring struggle of Black Americans to rid themselves of neglect, discrimination, and crushing disparity.

The Statue will also serve as a reminder that the Black community needs more Bobbys, more Hueys, Malcolms and Martins from the next generation, so that they can serve as the leaders of the future and finish the work that to this day, remains undone.

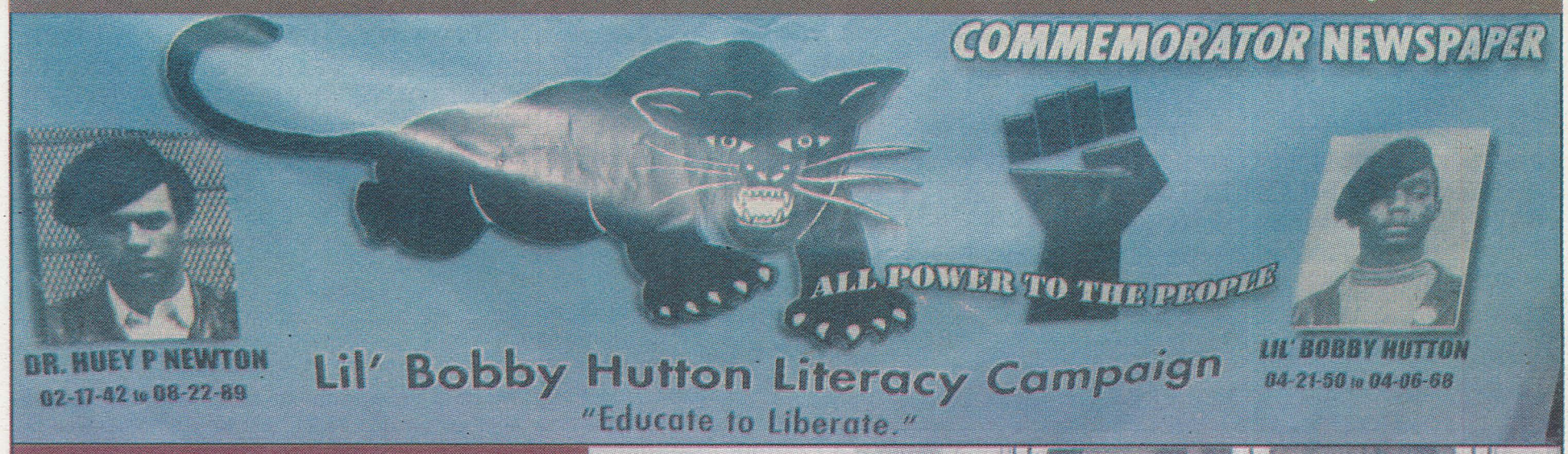
For those who would like to become literate in order to open up a world of opportunities, contact the Li'l Bobby Hutton Adult Literacy Program sponsored by The Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party, located at 1837 Alcatraz, Berkeley, or call 510-652-7170.

For those of you who would like to become a part of the Li'l Bobby Hutton Memorial, please attend the November 29 event at CLUB SIX (60 Sixth Street, SF), and your contribution of $20 will be used to make the memorial a reality.

"People may not remember what you said, but they will remember how you made them feel."

— Maya Angelou

San Francisco Longshore and Warehouse (Local 10) is proud to support the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign, sponsored by the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party.



The Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign is expanding its Tutorial Training Session for the upcoming school semester

Please call: 510-652-7170